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Presented by
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Methodist
Historical Society
Southern California - Arizona
Conference

To a highly esteemed friend
Reverend George B. Cliff
from
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THEY THAT HUNGER AND THIRST

Studies in the Life of the Spirit

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AND THIRST

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BY

GEORGE A. MILLER

GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY, INC.

1928

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PREFACE

JESUS knew the inner meaning of life. He knew the way to life's richest satisfactions. He spoke of it to Nicodemus, to the woman by the well-side, to the disciples in the upper room. It had something to do with the life of the spirit, the vivid reality and supreme transcendence of spiritual values in all life. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." "Every one that is born of the Spirit . . ." "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits." "It is the Spirit that quickeneth."

Those who live most spiritually are rarely the most fluent talkers about their experiences, and are often helpless in the presence of the philosophers and logicians. There is a reason for our confusion when we try to talk about these things of the realm unseen. We are dealing with matters outside our ordinary range of vision, "beyond the present focus of our minds," and it is not easy to tell just what we see and hear. Even the experts do not often reach the summits of the delectable mountains and our moments of vivid union with "reality" are few and far between. We are subject to much confusion when we try to think of God and imagine what He may be like. Most of us, ordinary church-member people, who in a general way

think well of God and His works and entertain amiable impulses toward our fellow men (especially those of our own race and colour) rarely break through the veil of the unseen, except on infrequent occasions when the tragedies or the crises of life drive us to that realm where we reach out helpless hands and cry for light. Our present dim vision at best can bring us but fleeting glimpses of that radiant city of God. We do not get much beyond the outer fringes of the transforming experience that comes to us at times, all unexpectedly, and lifts for a moment the soul to its highest powers, and makes us to know of a truth that we are indeed veritable sons of God. The highlands of the soul are a glorious country, but the veil intervenes between that fair city and our best efforts to visualise its splendour and wealth of experience for the spirits of the redeemed.

Why then devote so much time to a subject about which we know so little? Just for that reason. From this upper country flow the fountains that feed our deepest lives and renew our most vital energies. Men who have rare access to these summits of the soul, nevertheless draw therefrom life-giving waters. These upper springs nourish the ideals, revive the fainting aspirations, give new energy to failing impulses, stimulate and inspire every noble energy of life. The highest and holiest in every man's life comes from his contacts with the unseen and eternal.

All of us may not hope to attain the heights of David or Isaiah or John, nor to know the raptures of à Kempis or St. Francis, nor even the unbroken sweet

communion of Brother Lawrence, but we may at least multiply our lives by things divine and attain our own full measure of the Spirit of Him whom, having not seen, nevertheless we love.

To learn the language of our spiritual Canaan, to experience conscious fellowship with the Spirit of Reality, is to transform and enrich all life, and make us to know that we are citizens of that abiding city whose foundations are the eternal word of truth. Entrance upon this realm of spiritual consciousness becomes the most absorbing and glorious of all experiences possible to a human being.

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THEY THAT HUNGER AND THIRST
Studies in the Life of the Spirit

Chapter I

THE UNKNOWN COUNTRY

EVERY man in his serious moments, in the wakeful hours, or face to face with tragedy, feels in the deeps of him that there lies just out of reach a vaster universe concerning which he knows very little, except that it is there and that in some ultimate way it is the homeland of the soul. On the hither shores of the sea of consciousness we find the limits of our life-that-now-is, but we know that our eternal mansions are on the other side. And the tides bring us in now and then conscious evidences of the reality of the unseen. A drifting cedar branch speaks of the forests beyond. We feel that at any time we may come into clearer vision of the other side, and that even now it may not be far from us. Like John Robinson, preaching to the pilgrims setting forth from Holland on their perilous quest into unknown seas, we too feel that new prophetic insight, new light and truth, are yet to break forth from God's word.

In every generation arise prophets of vision and word and deed who make us feel that we are only moving about in the vestibule of some princely palace of the spirit whose greater glories are close at hand, and that the tragedy of existence will be to fail to enter in. We move about on the earth, but our con-

versation is in Heaven, or it may be, if we can learn the language. The restless spiritual consciousness of millions of ordinary men bears silent but authentic witness that the material life that we now live is but a fraction of the fulness of that larger life that yet shall be.

There are experts in these things of the spirit, but they do not tell us much about it. We listen to them and we know that they have something that we too desire to attain, but they do not make very clear to us just how we also may enter in. For most of us, absorbed by the ordinary business of living, the things of the spirit are dim and the realm of Ultimate Reality is remote. With many of those who profess to be pilgrims in The Way, spiritual attainments are negligible, and even among preachers of popular sermons no great number profess to be experts in the realm of spiritual consciousness.

This ineptitude of the experts brings us to the discovery that spiritual knowing, *per se*, is not so much a matter of revelation of something beyond and without ourselves, to be explained and declared unto us by adepts, as it is an inner kingdom, to be discovered and possessed, each for himself. Verily, "the kingdom of Heaven is within you." The language of this inner kingdom has never been translated into earth speech, hence the difficulty of telling any one else about it. We know that the tree of life grows just beyond the wall, and sometimes its leaves fall on our side. But the fruit of the tree, the life and power of spiritual consciousness, how shall we find and eat thereof and

become as gods, clearly knowing good and evil and living forever?

We are not wholly without guidance. There are formulas of faith that have stood the test of time, and that do avail for the soul in its hour of trial. There are well defined paths that lead toward God and those who faithfully walk therein do find Him. The experiences of millions of the redeemed do serve as a spiritual road map, and if we follow after those who knew God best, we shall find help in our own problems. But it is still true that most of us know more about biology and nutrition than of soul-life and communion with God.

For this it is easy to find reasons of convenience or inconvenience. Life is much occupied with the things of time and sense. Making-a-living is a very absorbing and fatiguing process. The clamorous claims of the flesh will not down, and the limits of mundane existence are very close and exacting. Having toiled and eaten and played a little and slept, there is small margin for the things unseen. Yet, in our heart of hearts we know full well that the neglected unseen spirit of life is intrinsically worth more than the total of the things that perish with the using. If only we could wholly enter upon and fully possess these treasures, what sons of God we might become! Sometimes we meet a man who has found the key and we note in him that which we would all fain become. There must be a way!

The downward pull of temptation loosens our grasp of higher things, and the undertones of sense deaden

the ear to spirit voices. But we have heard and seen enough to know that if we can once break the earth-drag we may yet fly with wings, and that if we can quicken our spirits' sensitiveness, we shall hear heavenly harmonies of which we have as yet but caught far echoes. Patent enough are the causes of our dulness of soul, but they suggest not so much reasons for discouragement as the promise of large rewards for further and more serious search. There are living people who have really made contacts with some of the mysteries of things divine. The scant and not too intelligible records of their experiences are wonderfully suggestive and stimulating. Their richest contribution has been themselves and their evident attainment of an upper consciousness.

There is nothing strange about the phenomena of an indescribable inner experience. How does it feel? How does it seem? How does life look to one who has tasted Reality and entered upon a higher consciousness? Evidently no one can know except those who have tasted it, and since the rest of us have not the experience we cannot understand its language. How does it feel to be in love? How does one respond to sunset? And how describe a symphony to a deaf man? The tongues of men and the eloquence of angels cannot make clear to us that which we have no terms to interpret nor perceptions to understand. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, and until there is vision and hearing testimony can do no more than waken desire to see and hear for ourselves.

What we can discern is that our hearts are hungry,

and when the aroma of spiritual plenty reaches our famished souls, we go seeking the heavenly feast for ourselves. There is but little relation between technical intellectual training in materialistic science and the secret of the Lord which is granted unto them that fear Him and love Him. It hath pleased God to withhold from the wise and prudent the key to the door of the spiritual storehouse, and to reveal the secret unto those who come to Him in spirit and in truth. Ignorance is no condition of spiritual attainment, but it has sometimes happened that the unlearned and simple have become wise and rich in the things of the spirit.

Opened eyes and unstopped ears may discern the Spirit everywhere. There is Voice and Presence and Person, and once we have received the inner light all life becomes at times illuminated, and the glory may be upon every bush and stone.

What then is the all-important business of human beings who would live on the highest levels? Two things: To attain personal fellowship with God and to live on as becometh sons and daughters of the Most High. No man can truly experience personal relations with God and not give his life to the realisation of the kingdom of Jesus on earth. And the second is like unto it; the spiritually minded man will give himself to the initiation of other men into the life of the spirit. Jesus summed it all up in the immortal word to the inquirer after the fundamentals: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, with all thy strength and with all thy mind; and thy

neighbour as thyself." Only supreme love for God can supply the driving power for a self-giving life of service, and only love for one's fellows can measure the balanced poise of a life that does as much for others as for itself.

Chapter II

WHEN THE HEART SPEAKS

A STUDENT of religious phenomena recently counted twenty-seven different kinds of "freak" meetings in a single city of the United States. From fervent little independent rescue missions, they ranged all the way through occultisms, rollers, healers, tonguers, various kinds of "saints," seers, mediums, readers, and rhapsodists to the disciples of Mother Eddy and the followers of Hindu magicians. Seemingly every one of them had enough devotees to keep the business going. In a western city a religious census revealed fifty-six kinds of churches, so-called. There was the "Church of God," from which a dissenting party had formed "The True Church of God." And there were four families who had come out from among these and announced themselves as, "The Only True Church of God." The Athenians of Paul's day were conservative stand-patters beside their versatile modern successors in the art of either telling or hearing some new thing.

Back of all these abnormal expressions exists something in the human heart that is eternally struggling for satisfaction. The souls of men are hungry, and failing to find, or ignoring when offered, the bread of life, have turned to the husks and chaff of a hundred absurdities.

The outcropping of these weird extravagances might have been predicted by some prophetic psychologist of fifty years ago. The hard and fast individualism and ecclesiastical conservatism of the eighteenth century did at least emphasise the relation of the individual man to God. Religion was not always rational nor logical, but it did bring to the human heart a sense of infinite values and, in the Wesleyan revival, a distinct spiritual consciousness and moral dynamic. The converts of those days had been through fires of conviction, and came by faith to a saving knowledge of sins forgiven. They were sons of God and they knew it. They read their titles clear to mansions in the skies, and they bore living testimony to a transforming power in their lives. Theirs was a "know-so" religion.

Then came the scientific spirit and the triumphs of the age of invention and progress. Seeking after causes, men came to recognise but vaguely the forces that are unseen. In time the materialists reduced all phenomena to forms of matter and modes of energy. Speculation took on an impersonal cast, and the old note of personal spiritual certainty was dulled by the growing cult of a materialistic form of evolution. The modern Sadducees arose and proclaimed that there is no certain resurrection nor knowable spirit nor ascertainable life that may register outside of reaction times and behaviour phenomena. The wind is simply wind and nothing more, and speculation as to its whence and whither is idle dreaming. As for being born of the Spirit, it is mere imagination.

Now comparatively few persons are capable of fol-

lowing intelligently the processes and conclusions of the scientists, but nearly all men feel the spiritual temperature of the times in which they live, and failing to follow the scientists, some of them swing to the other extreme and accept and promulgate the most absurd vagaries and unreasonable imaginings. By stopping their ears and shutting their eyes they claim to see wonderful colours and hear unutterable sounds. And other restless souls, hearing the outcry, run after the devotees and imagine that they also are among the prophets.

It is natural that a coldly scientific age should also become a wealth-loving, commercial age. Values that may be seen and counted and weighed and bought and sold come to be counted the chief ends of life. Ideals are very well, for those who have nothing else to take up their time, but stocks and bonds and the spoliation of the natural treasures of the earth, these are a man's work and there is no time for invisible values unknown to engineers and promoters. And millions of men, engrossed in the drive of a materialistic commercialism, have turned in desperation to the freak religions in search for something that would satisfy the soul.

Something is wrong; if nothing counts but matter then nothing avails but force. And human hearts can no more live by force than they can be fed on things. Is it any wonder that the starved and stunted spirits of men are trying every remedy for the inner ache that grows daily deeper under the chill of materialistic philosophy, the greed of commercialism, and

the horror of militarism? Verily we know that Benjamin Kidd spoke truly when he said that in human nature there is no innate tendency to progress. We have no assurance that the entire human race may not yet destroy itself by the forces of its own deadly hatred and cruelty. All that makes up modern civilisation may yet be crushed into shapeless ruins, leaving a savage and maddened remnant to begin over again the long struggle.

For a time the preachers thought to satisfy this intense hunger of soul by proclaiming an easy optimism that sounded well in our ears. The bankers would not permit another war, material advantage and scientific progress were to save the world from sin and selfishness. We heard of a divine immanence that ignored many of the terrible facts of life. God was everywhere and in everything, and somehow or other conditions were bound to improve. At basis all things were good, and we were forever comparing the outworn "old" with the vastly more progressive "new." While the selfish forces of life pulled downward, there must be some other gravitation that worked upward and would surely lift us higher and higher to the perfect life.

In this material emphasis and optimism we developed a dogmatism of the thing that is new, sometimes more intolerant and bitter of spirit than the conservatism of the reactionary "old." Now we know that there is no reason for panic when some advanced thinker comes along and insists that all ideas of God and life and Heaven and earth that antedate the

present generation must be thrown overboard as hopelessly out-of-date. We have learned to wait a little, knowing that some newer thing will make even this idea also uncouth.

All this would not be dangerous were it not that the materialism of the age has worked its way into the churches. The gospel of secularisation is everywhere with us. It is in our "school-house—Elk-Club—garage architecture," in our sensational sermon topics, in our up-to-date "popular" propaganda, in our flaming advertising and in our mercenary methods of financial promotion.

Stranger yet is the phenomena of churches which proclaim from the housetops their doctrinal orthodoxy, their abhorrence of evolution and self-confessed spirituality, yet base their faith in a gospel of "fire and sword," and declare savagely that when Jesus comes He will drench the earth with the blood of His enemies and wreak vengeance upon all who do not belong to the elect few who are to draw reserve seats at the spectacle of the finality of all things. Further than this irrational absurdity cannot go.

The trouble is that the hearts of men are hungry, and refuse to be satisfied with the dollar drives and efficiency emphasis of the organisational activities of the modern church. For a time we were earnestly assured that given publicity enough and money enough the redemption of the world soon would be accomplished. The movements of the church in its orbit were subjected to exact calculations and the church promoter had his day. But with all the exact science

of drives and campaigns and quotas and apportionments, the ecclesiastical engineer failed to foresee the eclipse of that something from above that alone can satisfy the inner, deeper restlessness of the soul till it rests in God.

There can be no permanent suppression of this inner quest of the spirit for the living God. The fad religions themselves bear witness to the deathless interest in things unseen. These abnormal expressions attest, not the erratic nature of the spirit, but its eternal vitality and tireless search after the Infinite. There is a spirit in man, and no wind of materialism nor drouth of neglect is able wholly to destroy the vitality of the heart in its cry for the living God.

Serious-minded people are appalled by the mad rush of mankind after every form of amusement. Normal recreation needs are pushed far beyond the limits of health and sound thinking. There is an element of jazz in the air about us. We reprove and deplore and exhort the young people, because youth is ever the play-time of life, but those of older years, as best they may, are keeping up with the children in the continual quest for some new form of excitement. Possibly nothing has ever done so much to vitiate the standards of good taste, to cheapen every holy sentiment, to exalt coarseness and popularise indecency, as the modern movie screen, and "everybody goes." And why all this? Are we worse as a generation than our fathers were? Is the world sinking into the pit of vulgarity? Not at all. Back of the amusement craze is the same hungry heart. One man turns

to séances or tongues, another rushes off to jazz music and dance forms appropriately named for the lower animals. Both men are trying to satisfy a restless, inner longing that, being unsatisfied, leaves its possessor no peace. Artificial stimulants are no substitute for sound health.

It is true that we live in an age of material value standards, and that we have freak religions, music, amusements, and personalities. But we also live in an age when men are restlessly seeking for something better than stones or husks. The time is again ripe for the voice of the prophet, proclaiming once more in the wilderness the way of the Lord. Never was there a more opportune moment for sounding from the battlements of the eternal city of God a clear note of spiritual Reality. We know as never before, that if we are to live in any real sense we will have to work through and beyond these temporary and abnormal things, and come to live not in the visible and temporal, but in the imperishable values of the unseen and eternal.

Chapter III

EVERYMAN'S RELIGION

THE term "mysticism" has got into bad company and may be beyond rescue. "The life of the spirit," "spiritual consciousness," or perhaps "communion with God," might be better terms for present use. Every one that is born of the Spirit knows that there are no terms in the English nor any other language that precisely express any of the things that we feel and know and hope for in the better depths of us.

Certain it is that this dominant urge within us has nothing to do with emotional extravagance or nervous disorders. The frenzies of the Delphic priestesses, the ravings of howling Dervishes, and hysterias by whatever name, have no relations with the experience of conscious relations with God. Nor have the extreme practices of the Christian mystics anything to do with the distinctly spiritual attainments of their better selves. In spite of their long fasts, unnatural and revolting self-tortures, and other ascetic practices, these "saints" did sometimes attain a certain effective communion with God that developed high spiritual values. Fixed contemplation for a long time of any object may produce hallucinations with accompanying visions and voices, but we need not concern ourselves much with the pathological symptoms in a

study of normal spiritual consciousness. Aside from a few sporadic cults of people who "roll" and speak with tongues there is little of the hysterical in present-day religious phenomena.

There is possible to every man a normal consciousness of God, and the value of any man's religion may finally be tested by its effectiveness in bringing him to where he can honestly say that he has found his way through the muddle of life's experiences to a satisfactory working relation with the God whom Jesus revealed as our Father. There are multitudes of people who occasionally glimpse the heights of fellowship with things divine, and who often regret that they cannot attain the distant uplands of the soul, but, at the same time, feel that these experiences are reserved for the specialists or for men and women who are endowed with extraordinary spiritual gifts.

He who admits his desire for a closer walk with God, under whatever name, thereby confesses himself capable of an effective working spiritual consciousness. The man who fears he does not possess a capacity for knowing God thereby proves that he is already nearer the kingdom than he suspects. The only hopeless people are those who don't care anything about God. What then are these unsatisfied people to do that they may leave behind the life of grim duty-doing and the main-strength struggle to live right at any cost, the boot-strap method of lifting one's self, and rise by better means to the levels of a God-consciousness something like that which Jesus lived?

It may shock some of us to be asked to begin by discarding all unusual and spectacular features of religious experience and phenomena. Miracle has its place, but not here. Everyman's spiritual consciousness must, first of all, be normal in its intake from above and in its outward social expression. When a man begins to claim that he has received revelations not vouchsafed to other men, and that he possesses a direct entrance to divine favour, we know forthwith that he is off the track. The kingdom of God cometh not with signs and wonders but by the wholly normal working of the Spirit in the life of a man who is willing to pay the price. Hence it follows that we have at all times a considerable number of spiritually-minded persons among us of whom we hear little just because they are so normal and natural in their relations with God and with men. These are the everyday men and women whose spiritual experiences make up the moral reserve of a pretty unsteady world, and ballast the ship of character in a choppy sea of disturbing events and experiences. Beside these steady-going folk who know God and find Him in the daily drive and drag of ordinary life, the boasted extravagances of religious freaks and fanatics sink into insignificance. We can reproduce most of their "blessings" by means of drugs and hypnotism, but no one claims that such phenomena have moral value.

It is the profound conviction of all normal mystics that confident assurance of faith, healing comfort in time of trouble, guidance in perplexity, and conscious

forgiveness of sins, are all directly produced by a Personal Power outside of ourselves. Otherwise prayer is but talking with one's self, and spiritual communion is only free play of the imagination. Too well we know that there is prayer that seems not to reach beyond the ceiling, and we have felt the sense of futility of any prayer when we lose the consciousness of a Presence with whom we speak. There is a prayer of cold faith in God, based on intellectual certainty that He is there and that He hears us when we call, but prayer "in the Spirit" must reach further than this.

There is a higher range of prayer, where we not only believe that God is and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, but we are also conscious of His actual nearness to us. Some one is in the room with us, and a something that we call fellowship comes into our hearts; we know because we know, just as we know our friends because we maintain living relationship with them.

Does some one remark that this conscious fellowship with God differs from the hysteria of the devotee only in degree? Then we turn to the unfailing test by which we shall know which is of God and which is nervous frenzy. By their fruits ye shall know these experiences of the spirit. Moral transformations do not result from Mohammedan self-torture cycles. With the extreme Christian mystics, moral results have been produced by communion with God and not by extravagant and abnormal practices.

The glory of the normal spiritual consciousness registers in peace of mind, and is shed abroad in moral wholeness and social helpfulness.

It will help much to remember that this normal spiritual consciousness at its best is never a constant factor in any life. No life is more subject to the law of rhythm than the life of the spirit. Rhythm registers the come-and-go of consciousness. To-day we know and know vividly that God is right here, within us; yesterday we were not so sure about it, to-morrow we are apt to be very busy and by night-time wonder what has become of the sense of His Presence that so possessed us yesterday. But this variation also is normal, and the phenomena of the spirit-life swing around the circle of varying modes and phases, and invariably come back again to the more and ever more vivid knowing of things divine. Nor is there need that we should imagine the mountain top to be the normal habitation of the soul. We should die of spiritual anemia without the exercise of human service down among the multitudes. The memory of the summit experience will linger long; one song may bless a whole day and one glow of fellowship make radiant long intervals of heavy toil. The final result is the sum of a succession of varied experiences, each leaving its value-deposit of something good.

Those who would reduce life to mathematical values and bankable securities, forget the pragmatic fact that millions of souls do actually find moral help and new courage in their conscious personal relations with God.

Through the storm and struggle of changing ecclesiastical form, and the ebb and flow of religious interest, the saving factor in the Christian movement is just this normal feeling that God is here and is paying attention to us and listening to what we say, and that we can trust Him with the present day and the final outcome of it all. The church survives because in spite of its blunders and its sometimes pettiness, it quickens in most of us the secret hope and ripening conviction that this knowing of God may grow from more to more, and ripen at last into glorious fellowship where we shall "know as we are known"; that is, where spiritual consciousness will be reciprocal and in some sense equal. Something in the service of the church makes us to know that we are living below our highest levels. We will listen somewhat to any one who brings us promise of better things, and if he shows by unmistakable evidence that he has attained in his own life the good thing of which he speaks, then we will follow him to the end over whatever trail he may point out to us. What we really want to know from our spiritual teachers is not their theological speculations nor metaphysical conjectures, but whether they themselves have found God and are personally acquainted with Him.

We are dealing in a realm where arguments turn to stone and leave us cold and hungry. Our findings need proclaiming, not defending. Our case rests on repeated declarations of the things that we have seen and do know and "hereby declare unto you." Jesus proclaimed the kingdom He came to set up among

men and wasted no time in apologetics. One living example is worth a score of logical demonstrations. One good apple will send us all to find the tree on which it grew; one healthy, normal soul puts us all to seeking the Great Physician. Paul at times becomes confusedly metaphysical, but we skip that part and hasten on to his own virile and vivid testimony as to what Christ means to him personally.

If the teaching of Jesus regarding the life of the spirit means what He evidently intended to say about it, then there must be some valid and satisfying experience of things divine for every normal man. We are not interested in a spirituality reserved for specialists and peculiar people. Jesus never once turned any man away saying, "I'm sorry, but you have not the special spiritual qualities necessary to those who wish to come unto me and find rest." There is something for every one of us or there is nothing but illusion for all of us. Few men have insisted less on this than William James, yet we find him saying of his unknown God that he needs Him and that He must be true. This philosopher somehow always dealt with things of the spirit from the outside, but nevertheless even for him, God was "dimly real." It is just that dimness of spiritual consciousness that proves the possibility of clearer vision, and the vigour and vitality of personal faith for every man bears close relation to the degree of developed spiritual consciousness that he has attained. Such high experiences on normal levels for all men do open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. It is true that many

of us are sub-normal on our spiritual side. But, under-developed though we be, the soil is there and the living thing that we call spirit is there, and Jesus said that He came that they might have life and have it more abundantly.

This cultivation of spiritual consciousness is costly business, in many ways, as many a man knows to his perplexity. But, take it all through, it pays the largest dividends known to any human effort. The practice of fellowship with God is the highest and most fruitful act of any human personality.

Chapter IV.

THE THIRD KNOWING

ARE there two kinds of knowledge or three? Is man a being who learns some things through sense perceptions and the others by reasoning processes, or is there also a third kind of knowing by which the spirit that is in man comes to direct relations with Reality? Is human personality bounded by length and breadth, or are there also height and depth?

The extreme materialist answers promptly enough that beyond the perceptions of the five senses and rational inferences therefrom, nothing may be recognised or known. The brain may not secrete thought quite as the liver secretes bile, but mental processes are dependent upon a physical basis.

However, the case for mind as relatively independent and self-directing is pretty well established. If all is matter, then the blacksmith's arm or a scalp massage should be accompanied by corresponding mental development, but, in matter of fact, no physical discipline ever yet made its devotee able to solve a quadratic equation or speak a new language. Good health helps the mind to function and sun and rain assure a harvest, but sun and rain alone never yet produced a crop without vegetable life. Given a free rein and open field, the mind can range far and wide,

find the footsteps of God and move in a realm wholly apart from the restrictions of the five senses which supply the raw material for mental consumption.

There are plenty of exponents of the two-dimension life, and their great services are not to be ignored. They have lengthened the space and widened the interests of human life immeasurably. Man to-day is a more intelligent and powerful being than ever before, thanks to the scientists. But the two-dimension world is fatally flat. Strong bodies and keen minds may produce and manipulate all the astonishing devices of modern civilisation, including the ingenious means of racial self-annihilation, but if this is all, the developed man may become the most dangerous, and flying machines may rain destruction from the skies. There is always something missing in life until we add to our two-way surface extension a third dimension. I stand by the shore and contemplate the rolling surf. There are sea and sand and sound. Salt water is in motion, actuated by some invisible force. That is all my senses tell me. By intellectual operations I know that the force behind the waves is wind, that out yonder ships are passing, and that there is a farther shore, the margin of other civilisations.

But is this all? Set in order all the facts of perception and of reason, and we have only the surface data of something vaster. What is back of the wind and the waves and the rounded rim of the sea? Whence and whither and why and *who*? To any sensitive soul in the presence of nature's mightiest

works, there comes inevitably a sense of Personality. There is more than matter present in Niagara and Popocatepetl and Shasta. Sensitive souls have broken through this veil of the seen and found there a being that they call God. And if there really is Personality in the universe, that Personality can be discovered and known only by other personalities. And personality is but another name for Spirit. After the scientist has done his utmost to explore and chart the latitude and longitude of our present world, there still remain the unfathomed depths of consciousness and the untouched heights of spirit. And it is significant that above us stretch away the countless starry worlds of God's infinite universe. "As the heavens are high above the earth," so is the spiritual dimension with its third kind of knowing, by direct contact with God, of vastly greater import than the things of time and sense.

Once the psychologists told us that man as a sentient being comprised three faculties, the intellect, the emotions, and the will. Psychology was a cross section of human nature neatly labelled for inspection.

Then came the more moderns and we were all wrong. Psychology was the stuff of which dreams are made. Vanished were the old three-term phrases, and we learned of the conscious, the fore-conscious, the non-conscious, the unconscious, and by no means let us forget the sub-conscious. Human nature consists of one room, the conscious, and a basement, the sub-conscious. And the psycho-analysts are very keen on the cellar. Ingenious, surely, and interesting, cer-

tainly, and good enough as far as it went, but far from complete for any one who recognised in his own nature and experience some facts that certainly do not belong to either the shadowy fore-conscious by the one window, or to the gloomy cellar with its growling survivals of unsavoury ancestry.

There is something more to be explained in a human personality than comes within this first-floor-and-basement analysis. There is also an upper room, illuminated by a skylight, and once the door into that sun parlour of the soul is effectively opened, the heavenly view giveth light unto all that is in the house. This outlook heavenward is the third dimension of the soul, and its revelations become a third kind of knowledge, and this third range of consciousness has power to illuminate and transform the other two. We agree with the Freudians that the inhabitants of the cellar are an unlovely lot and that when they get loose on the main floor, the results are disastrous. But like all basement dwellers they cannot endure the light, and no weapon has been found so effective against them as that of letting in the light from above.

We are coming to the reasons for the unsatisfied heart. Hearts cannot feed on things nor live in the dark. Without the light of the upper room and the experiences of the third level of perceiving, the hearts of men starve, and they stumble about seeking satisfaction in abnormal interests and exercises. The earth's orbit is a result of the total pull of all the other heavenly bodies. All efforts to chart the motives and conduct of life will come to confusion until we

discover and take into account the upward pull of the Spirit, and the law of that kingdom of spirit and life to which man as truly belongs as to the realms of sense and thought. So long as personality finds expression through a trinity of body, mind and spirit, we can never solve all the problems of his existence by trying to reckon with two kingdoms only out of the three.

How vast and various may be the phenomena of this third universe, doth not yet appear. We can admit and utilise the light that streams through the upper windows of the soul, and know that without this illumination the glory of the infinite fades and the soul walks in darkness. No merely mental process can deal adequately with this heavenly glory. The mind can work within its own range of consciousness and experience, but we come upon a super-mental kingdom and life of which the main concern is not the collection and classification of material data, but the attainment of conscious spiritual certainty by direct contacts of the soul with Personal Reality. The triumph of this experience breaks out in the soul's ringing cry of assurance. The soul knows and knows that it knows, because it experiences directly a sense of fellowship with the ultimate Reality of existence.

Now such experiences as these are to the materialist foolishness and to the formal religionists a stumbling-block. The soul's inner experience of God cannot be subjected to questionnaire methods or inductive analysis. We cannot count the many mansions, but we can be certain of their existence and of their sufficiency

for all our needs. In a very general way we may surmise that the third dimension of spirit is to the second dimension of mind as the mind is to the physical existence, but in saying this we have only said that the spirit's life is more important than any other life we know. As mind reaches out into a universe beyond the touch of our hands, so spirit makes contacts with a vast universe inaccessible to our unaided minds. We inhabit a wonderful planet, but we know that there are uncountable numbers of other astronomical bodies whose orbits compose an extension of space beside which our own world becomes an insignificant speck on the outermost measureless rim of the universe. We come to know that the infinite realm of living spirit is vaster than the total physical universe as is the stellar cosmos greater than our goodly frame, the earth. And here is the glory and the wonder of it, every man has within himself something that in some way is related to and corresponds with this spaceless, timeless realm of spirit and life.

Now we begin to understand why it is that when we try to compress all of human life into two dimensions, hopeless tangles and inconsistencies spring up all about us. If the material universe cannot be comprehended in two dimensions, how much less can we understand the immortal spirit of man while we ignore the upward reach of his hunger for spiritual fellowship with God? Absorbed as we are in the interests of time and sense, it is not strange that as yet we know but little of eternal things unseen, and often fail in our efforts to interpret in terms of values

that perish with the using, the eternal glories glimpsed by the soul that has come to know God through the inner and direct experiences of things divine.

In all ages there have been men and women who have kept alive the sacred fire, and whose illuminating testimonies have saved the rest of us from darkness. The remnant has always lifted up a torch to light our feet in the way of life and keep us from losing wholly the moral pathway of mankind. How much we owe to these prophets of the inner light, we can never know and in pagan and pre-Christian civilisations their voices have called to the un-sounded deeps in the hearts of men and always there has been a response. Socrates, Plato, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and a host of others have in their own way sought after God if haply they might find Him in the Voice that speaks to every conscience and the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Being a law unto themselves, they have reflected the light that they saw, even in darkness. And when we come to the Book of books, a blaze of glory shines forth from the lives of men who far surpassed all their fellows in accurate knowing and intimate experience of the kingdom of the spirit. Truly the senses have not seen, nor heard, nor hath the mind of man conceived the things that God has prepared for them that love Him, and so loving Him, enter upon the direct experience of spiritual reality.

Chapter V

THE GOSPEL OF FACTS

THE demand for facts is a valid research-method in any realm, and we may well look for the facts in the zone of religious consciousness. But for any adequate survey of personality we need all the facts, not merely those of a material nature. Physical facts do not explain nor interpret spiritual experiences. We have extended man's hearing by the radio, his seeing by the telescope, his speed of travel by mechanics, but in so doing we have not deepened his moral nature nor pushed back his spiritual horizon. When we try to enter the spiritual realm with material facts and phenomena, we move about as blind men on an uncharted road and land in the ditch of despair. Material facts alone may be valleys of very dry bones, if there be no interpreting Spirit to breathe on them and make them live. We need just now a new and spiritual synthesis of the recent and valuable findings of the physiologists and psychologists. Some very significant phenomena seem to have escaped the scientific researchers.

The hunger of the human heart that refuses to be satisfied with laboratory stones and philosophical formulas is a real and important fact. The uncharted moving winds of energy in the realm of spirit

and life are vivid and significant facts. The existence of fifty-six kinds of churches in one small city is a suggestive fact. The multiplication of isolated but similar groups of religious phantom-followers is a fact. That vast numbers of people give time and money to the maintenance of a metaphysical system founded upon the denial of the most obvious realities of sin and suffering, is in itself a challenging fact. Surely only a man with a hungry heart would turn to such a jumble of dislocated ideas for help in his hour of need.

Herbert Spencer wrote, "What knowledge is of most worth?" and answered thus, "The uniform reply is science. This is the verdict on all counts," and goes on to declare that science is the answer to all the problems of life. Spencer spoke for the materialism of his age, with its development of an extreme form of a materialistic form of evolution that deals only with natural selection, variation, and conformity to type, the while leaving God out of account and making man the best of the beasts.

The trouble with the materialistic scientists is not wrong methods so much as short range. Once we get all the facts, we shall find our way to the truth. If an empty stomach is a stubborn fact, a starved spirit is a still more disastrous fact. To limit our facts to the things that are seen and heard is to ignore the whole upper, vaster universe of which the soul by its own secret consciousness knows itself to be a part. The reality of a universe beyond the range of the five senses is a thrilling fact and demands the conscien-

tious attention of reverent men. It is for a clearer understanding of this realm and a conscious relation thereto that the innermost hearts of men are clamouring.

It is a fact to be recognised that if our eternal city of God is to be anything more than a ground-plan, it needs a third, up-reaching dimension of spirit and life. The data of this lift into the invisible is deserving of our highest and closest attention. It is a fact that the world is sick unto death of the gospel of brute force, and that there exists in the hearts of thinking men a great and gnawing question as to whether after all, civilisation, such as we now have, may not yet devour itself and go down to helpless ruin. We have attained more power than we know how to use for the good of men, and our knowledge is turned to self-destruction. Men are restlessly seeking for a why and are asking where we are to look for the outcome. Militarism, soulless culture, non-religious social uplift, secret complots, and forcible reforms have not cured the hurt of the human heart.

But while these things are true, it is also a fact that when men attain the discovery and experience of an upper universe of the spirit they come to a new viewpoint and to a satisfactory solution of the what-it-is-all-about problem. And men do somehow come to know of the existence of this upper world, even before they find the doorway thereto. A mole may be an expert in soils and root-flavours, but if once he could know that there is near at hand an upper realm of light and free space, he might become an unhappy

rodent. We men creatures live in a tunnel for the most part, but in our innermost consciousness we know, as we know nothing else, that there is an upper realm and that something in us is made for that land of light and life, and will never be content till we break through the wall that keeps us out. Up above there are light and air and flowers and fruit, and there will yet be wings.

It is a fact that some men sometimes do get real glimpses of the upper world. Jacob on his pillow of stone saw it. The servant of Elisha with astonishment gazed upon the conquering hosts of the air. The angels at Bethlehem broke through the veil and sang of the land unseen. And Jacob and Gehazi and the shepherds were transformed men because of what they saw and heard. So is every one that is born of the Spirit. They come back to us, these twice-born beings, with a new note of spiritual certainty. They tell us what we may have dimly begun to suspect, that the cure for everything is found in this upper, larger life, just out of sight. It may be that no one ever really lives a full and satisfying life until he establishes close contacts with this life of Reality where the soul at last *knows*. We cannot answer life's great questions without the third dimension. One cannot solve quadratic equations by long division. Until we chant "glory to God in the highest," we cannot expect to establish "peace on earth and good will among men."

It is a fact that many men have performed noble and sacrificial acts without any rational sanction, because of some upper force that impelled them. Some

of these have not always been notably devout, but they have somehow been moved by a super-rational motive. Samuel L. Clements shortened his life, toiling to pay bad debts that he could have defaulted. Walter Scott gave his utmost of toil and talent and stripped himself of his last penny to meet obligations for which he was not responsible. Millions of people have contributed of time and money and convenience that churches might be built and institutions founded and missionaries sent forth, all for the lifting up of those whose misfortune was no fault of the givers. For such actions there is no rational explanation, unless we accept the untenable notion that men make sacrifices because they get more joy from suffering than from pleasure. Martyrdom is not ecstasy, and when a man dies at the stake he is a long time dead.

It is a fact that friendship is a priceless possession, the laws of which cannot be formulated on any basis of self-interest. Communion of human hearts is a thing wholly immaterial and essentially spiritual, and friends are not won nor held on commercial or materialistic grounds.

It is a fact that the idealism of youth stands out as an eternal refutation of the fallacy of materialism. What matters it that the self-effacing callings offer small financial reward for the years of strength, and for the evening time, poverty and hardship? In spite of this, young men still give their all to causes that assure them small returns, and faithfully serve out their lives in unselfish giving of their all to their less fortunate fellows. Dan Crawford, twenty-two years

in Africa without coming out, and going in again, never to return, is a fact of transcendent importance for the human race. Pilgrims and exiles on the earth, thousands of men have become for no material reward at all. Many of them have gone to their fields without raising the question of salary. Having surrendered the right arm of comfort and the right eye of pleasure, they have cut themselves off from possessions, home and friends, and how lonely they sometimes are only the initiated can know.

It is a fact that supreme sacrifice always includes an element wholly beyond rational justification. Else why should men stand singing on the decks of the sinking *Titanic*, while women and children get away in the boats? Why did young McLaughlin, a student passing by chance the blazing Iroquois Theater, throw himself into the burning pile to rescue the helpless until his own life paid the forfeit?

It is a fact, verified in all generations, that the deepest, strongest, and most lasting forces in human life lie wholly outside of the scope of scientific investigation and measurement. In all the restless beat of human hearts and surge of human hopes is registered the eternal fact that there is a spirit in man, and that nothing short of the inspiration of the Almighty can give him understanding.

Following closely on this gospel of ascertained fact, comes the really valuable hypothesis of behaviourism. Since we cannot penetrate with our testing apparatus the inner life and consciousness of the spirit, we can at least—so we are assured—and at most, note and

measure the actions that connote the operation of the forces within. Whence comes the present-day emphasis on function as the measure of life. Every living thing must "act" or do certain things in certain ways, and by their actions we shall know them.

Nor have we aught to fear. We accept the challenge of the behaviourists as we do that of the searcher after facts. But again we insist on studying the behaviourism of the whole man, including the spiritual nature of man. If mental tests have a valid place, then there must be a conduct-exponent of the immortal, eternal, unsatisfied part of man that responds to the Eternal Goodness and goes out at any cost to meet the Spirit of the Infinite and learn lovingly to say, "Our Father." Sacrificial living that arises from an undying conviction in the hearts of men that there is something gloriously better out beyond, is as valid a behaviour symptom as any within the range of psychological experiment.

Ancient dwellers on the continent of Europe worked their way westward till they came to the shores of an uncharted sea, beside which they might easily have sat themselves down in ease were it not for the nagging challenge of the restless Atlantic which gave them no peace till they were launched on its stormy billows in quest of whatever lay beyond. Something from beyond the horizon spoke to something within the heart, and men became uneasy. That was their behaviour, geographically considered.

To early explorers on Panama came tales of a land of gold to the south and their hearts of avarice

were stirred within them. They might have remained in comfort on the strip between the two seas, but they did nothing of the kind. Behaviourism again, in response to the challenge of something beyond the horizon.

There was an ignorant but naturally intelligent servant girl, whom her mistress assayed to teach many things, including something of the stars of the southern nights. To her they had been glittering specks in the sky and nothing more. That they might be other worlds, even larger than this one, was all but impossible for her to imagine. At last some idea of the greater universe found its way into her belated brain, and she jumped up and rushed about exclaiming, "How stupid am I, how stupid am I!" For her the night sky would never be the same and all life took on a different hue. And it may be that some of us, perhaps only a very little wiser than the girl, may also have been mistaking for incidental specks in the spiritual sky, realities potentially far vaster than the round of incidents and actions that go to make up this present world.

Why do not the initiated tell us clearly the story of the life of communion and spiritual fellowship with God? Many of them do try to do so, but for the most part they make little headway against our inability to understand what they are talking about. There was a shepherd boy in a distant province of old Spain who possessed the soul of a musician. The rude life of his community afforded no opportunities for the expression of his dormant gift. When the

sheep were sold he made a great journey to the city and listened enraptured to the real music of a violin played by a master. He travelled homeward as in a dream, and soon learned the uselessness of trying to tell his friend what he had heard. Patiently he gathered rough materials and fashioned a rude sort of fiddle. Feeble and squeaking were the tones and as he wore away the days with strange scrapings and wailings, the villagers sadly shook their heads; he had gone queer, his city experiences were too much for him. Whatever was he trying to do? Something for which there was no rational sanction within the experience of the villagers on the mountainside.

Small wonder that the once-born can make little of our attempts to tell what we have seen and do know. Our own hearts are ill at ease in the universe till we find our way to the heart of God, and there come to rest in that abundance that knows no limits.

Chapter VI

WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

IT has been said that the distinguishing characteristic of man is his capacity for spiritual consciousness, but definitions in this realm are not easy. There are plenty of things that spirituality is not. Certainly it is not gloomy forebodings nor aloofness from the normal and pressing interests of life. Peculiar pronunciations and meaningless mannerisms have nothing to do with spirituality. Nor do incomprehensible terminology and muddy metaphysical phrases have any relation to the life of the spirit. Spirituality is not an emotional cycle, a hysterical cataclysm, nor an epileptic fit. By no means is it a holier-than-thou attitude toward one's fellow men. What may be a meaningless term to the materialist, whether philosopher or money-grubber, may be a word of sinister significance for minds that have wandered off into vague occultisms.

Spirituality, naturally enough, has to do with the realm of spirit and begins with a consciousness of the validity and reality of spiritual things. Spiritual certainty is a matter of conscious experience and so long as the life of the spirit is a matter of conjecture or doubtful questions, the questioner is but on the outer fringes of spirituality. The twice-born do not speak

of spiritual verities as probable hypotheses or working theories.

It is an unfailing characteristic of this spiritual certainty that it arises not from reasoning processes, from accepted testimony, nor from preponderance of probabilities. It comes direct, by that super-knowing of the inner soul that works in its own realm of consciousness. The forces of this life work independently of physical limitations and observations. The winds of spirit blow where they will and we cannot tell whence they come nor whither they go, but we can live in the open air of spiritual freedom and receive from these winds health and power. One could not very well describe how the wind feels to a person who had never been out of a closed room. But the spiritually minded know, because they felt and tested the breath of heaven and it has brought them power from beyond.

Spirituality is not achieved through the acceptance of testimony, but witnesses have value, nevertheless. The contagion of living faith makes our own hearts hungry for the bread of which the witnesses have partaken. Something from them passes into our spirits and we begin to seek. Truly spoke Dean Inge, "Religion is not only taught, it is caught from some one that has it." Holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit and this moving of the Spirit is the mark of the spiritually minded.

Every man has some capacity for spirituality, latent or atrophied though it may be. The problem is to develop and fill it. Few there be who recognise the

real meaning of the inner cravings for reality, or the actual causes of that restlessness that rushes about trying to fill the soul with some new excitement; anything to keep the mind off its own hunger for reality. When a man claims that there is no such thing as spiritual consciousness, that he has no "feeling," his very lament may register his inner uneasiness. There is a tale of one such brother who was so troubled by his lack of feeling that he could not sleep at night. There are men who stoutly insist that it is delusion, that there is no such thing as spiritual consciousness. They hold themselves superior to any wave of feeling. And if, perchance, they meet some tide of upspringing emotional power, they frantically let down all anchors of denial. If the anchors hold, they forthwith proclaim that there was no tide.

There is no man who may not, if he will, know for himself the reality of the universe of life and enter into some active and conscious relation with things divine. By a thousand whispers the Spirit speaks to men of the greater kingdom of Reality. In memories of holy moments, in reminders of mercies innumerable, in hours of high and holy purposes, in the voice of a friend, the echo of a song, the hush of a prayer, in the silence of death, God speaks to men of holy mysteries, and the soul knows for itself that there is a Reality beyond the things seen and heard.

Spirituality is personal relation with the world of spirit; it is conscious fellowship with God. There is much in all human life that is related to the life

of the spirit, and there is much vague phraseology that seems to express an effort to impersonalise the spiritual intuitions and longings that come to every man. "Some call it Evolution—autumn—consecration—longing; and some call it God." There is always a notable difference between a person who has entered into a conscious religious experience of God and one whose spiritual quickenings have never been focussed by a definite religious awakening. What the mind knows as the diffused awareness of a something beyond, the definite Christian consciousness recognises as a living God, a loving Father with whom one may enter into personal relations of transforming power. Whatever the outer variations of expression, the inner reality of experience ever has been and must be this one thing, to know God in some conscious fellowship. When we hear people talking of spirituality in other terms, as force, as moral motive, as means to some good end, as physical health, as temporal advantage, as a technical sort of knowledge, then we know that they have lost their bearings on the course.

There may be plenty of other indirect results of spiritual living but spirituality that focuses on something else than God can never attain the highest levels. There is a valid principle in this fellowship with Spirit for Spirit's own sake that we cannot ignore if we seek the highest range of spiritual consciousness. Decry as we may the principle of "Art for Art's sake," there remains still the self-sufficiency of all pure idealism, the worship of truth and beauty and love and

life primarily for what they are rather than for what we get from them. And so doing, they bring to us their richest gifts.

For those who have come to know God this discussion of what spirituality is seems an idle waste of words. The spiritually minded are not always interested in the study of spiritual phenomena nor the philosophy of spiritual consciousness. It is too much like pulling the flower to pieces to see how it is made. Better possess and enjoy the beauty and fragrance of it. Possessing something of the supreme knowledge, they look with clear eyes upon the Source of all Truth and walk steadily in the Light. Spirituality is something to be experienced, not argued about. It is like breathing in its constant vitalising of the All of existence. It is like good health and glorious beauty and abounding strength. It is like unto every good and perfect gift, in that it comes, and comes freely and abundantly, down from the Giver of all, but it is in itself above and beyond all gifts. It is the great all-first thing that Jesus urged so strongly as the motive-center and dominating power of life. Spirituality is first, last and always, personal fellowship with God, and he who consciously makes this fellowship the first thing in his life finds all other things surely and accurately falling into place. Most of the confusions of life come from getting some second thing into first place.

Chapter VII

ENTRANCE CONDITIONS

THERE have always been people ready to show us the surest way to Heaven. Jesus met them but He paid little attention to the prescriptions of the religious experts of His day. Traditional observances, ritualistic requirements, legal niceties He brushed aside. Modern methods are no less numerous and various than those of ancient times. "Plans" of salvation, "steps" and directions concerning "how to be saved" we have a plenty. Sometimes vigorous and violent are the claims that unless certain specified conditions are met, all is anathema. Often we find none of the specified conditions in the teachings of Jesus nor the writings of Paul and John. These teachers were not lacking in definite principles. Paul mentioned one fundamental, that a man should believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus named another, that "ye must be born again."

Some of these directions look like substitutes for spiritual consciousness. The ritual of the church may be very helpful as a means of worshipful expression, but it is not an indispensable aid to salvation. Uniformity of religious experience might be a useful thing from the standpoint of evangelistic convenience and organisational effectiveness, but the spiritual life has

never yet attained uniform expression nor developed a standard form of experience.

Nor have works of penitence proved an effective highway of holiness. Tortuous, round-about and often wholly misleading have been the pathways of bleeding feet and breaking hearts. Penances, masses, confessions, pilgrimages, torments and payments have not much helped us to find peace or reality. How long it has taken to learn that what we need is a shorter and more direct way through to God. Many have been the hurdles set across the pathway, often with good motives. We tried to set stepping stones in the path and how often have they become stones of stumbling. Creeds, rituals, shibboleths, uniformity of thought and feeling, thirty-nine articles, doctrinal puzzles, theological sophistries; men have tried to vault them all, only too often to fall exhausted without the gate.

Jesus knew nothing of these obstacles as means of grace. His essentials were few, only two or three in fact. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." God first; godly living, neighbour loving, simple but infinite! What a world of spiritual tragedy might have been avoided by following the Sermon on the Mount.

It is a matter of common observation that when the church maintains a constant and healthy emphasis on the life of the spirit, and keeps the fires of spiritual fervour burning on its own altars, there is little problem

of extravagant imitations of the fanatics and make-believes in the realm of experience. It is the lifeless church that freezes out the few earnest seekers after reality and drives them to the fads and extravagances. The cure for counterfeit spirituality is the promotion of "vital piety," the realisation of an abundant entrance into the realities of fellowship with God.

We have been slow to comprehend the teaching to Nicodemus. Roman legalism, mechanical substitution, standardised emotions, uniform doctrinal requirements, had no place in the thought of Jesus when he would say the most important word for all men. "Ye must be *born* again." The realm of spirit is not a secret order, a police court, nor a trial balance; it is a kingdom of life, and its nature is spiritually biological. Entrance into the kingdom of God is a re-birth of personality.

With a million variations in details, the general processes of awakening and regenerating human personalities are always the same. No two persons look exactly alike, but we all eat and drink and breathe and live and die in the same general way. Various as are our individual expressions of our fellowship with God, we all attain the heavenly heights by the same general processes. The steps are simple.

1. At some time there comes a conscious awakening to the reality and all-importance of the life of the spirit. No man ever attained a consciousness of God who did not in some way come to a sense of his own impotency to solve the whole problem of existence. In some one of a thousand ways the inner spirit has

awakened to the urgent need of something above and beyond sense and reason, and to a consciousness of heart-hunger; the soul in despair knows that it must turn to God. Many keys may turn the lock of this inner door of the heart, and one may never know in advance which of them will touch the secret spring in the heart of another.

2. Somewhere, in some way comes an act of decision. There is no forcing of men to accept God. The original "image" of God, that power of independent moral initiative still abides, crippled and distorted as it may sometimes become. Man has the final word of acceptance or rejection of the pathway that leads to conscious spiritual experience. Perverted may be tastes and desires and practices, but somewhere within human personality still resides the power to initiate a new attitude; "Our wills are ours to make them thine."

3. What happens next or how it happens no one can say, but in some way at some time there comes to every man a consciousness of God. When we try to prescribe rules for this experience we fall into dogmatism and narrowness. The first light may be the faintest dawn of a summer morn, or it may be the belated sun-burst after a breaking storm, but somewhere the light comes and the soul knows for itself.

4. The life of the spirit is an endless extension of steps by which we come nearer and nearer to that consciousness of blessed fellowship that grows clearer and stronger as the years go by. Breaking light always reveals unforeseen obstacles across the pathway.

There are ties to sever, habits to break, and burdens to bear. There are distinct losses incident to leaving the old life and entering the new. There is plain stubbornness, hard and uncompromising, there are indulgences unworthy of the high calling. One must deliberately cease to do evil, and initiate the final moral triumph of the redeemed spirit.

5. Negative surrender registers a beginning but only a beginning. Follows in some form positive, energetic devotement of being to the new life. Negative goodness is not enough. One must also "learn to do well." The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force. Seek, knock, ask, act; "sell all that thou hast"; "strive to enter in," are the rules of the effective life. "In the day that thou seekest me with thy whole heart thou shall find me." This is no quest for the faint-hearted and feeble-kneed. There is a stretching of soul after the things divine that tests the fibres of being. There is a "living hard on high levels" that toughens the moral fibre and develops a reliable resistance to evil in every form.

6. Not all things come by striving, however. Striving is the condition of entrance, but having sold all and ventured all and devoted all, there comes surely a quickening life from above. At last the soul learns to wait patiently on the Lord and He shall bring it to pass—that quiet and all-sufficient transformation from above that no man can ever effect for himself. "Receive ye the Holy Spirit," said Jesus. We are saved by grace or we are never saved at all. We are

justified by faith or we are never justified. After the chains that have bound us are broken we are lifted, not by our own efforts but by a Power that is without and above us. Unless we are begotten by the will of God we can never be born again. The process of revelation is an opening of the eyes of the soul, but only a divine Hand can cause the scales to fall. Spiritual fellowship with God is something more than begging for favours and talking solemnly about the Holy Spirit! When the soul ceases to say anything at all and quietly listens, there does come a message, a word of life and power. On the highest levels the soul ceases to ask for anything at all, except it be clearer vision, and waits the more adequate revelation of the divine Presence. Great have been the spiritual losses of earnest souls that have striven, but have not learned the secret of waiting after struggle for the still small voice that follows the earthquake of readjustments and the storm of emotional upheavals and in quietness and strength registers the Divine Presence. "Be still and know that I am God." After we have made ready for the Heavenly Guest, the sense of spiritual fellowship comes as the direct gift of God.

Here we find emerging two kinds of people. Conscious religious experience has always followed two different pathways. There are people for whom religion is a matter of authority and obedience to prescribed procedure and there are others for whom the life of the spirit is a matter of spiritual fellowship and splendid adventure in the realm of the unseen

and unutterable. There are devotees of the creed and there are followers of the gleam. If only the two could go on, each in the way that best leads him God-ward, and permit others the same privilege! The ritualists may find a real fellowship with God. And the adventurer may walk with his divine Redeemer and come thus to the radiant Lord and in that good day, we still may not see alike but at least we shall be like Him for we shall see *Him* as He is.

Chapter VIII

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

So long as the rain descends alike on all kinds of people the spiritually minded will not expect to be made exceptions in a world where uniform operation of cause and effect prevail. Any kind of living that is subject to motives of expediency, by that very token falls short of the life of the spirit.

Neither does the attainment of spiritual consciousness lift a life above the level of moral testing. Temptations, like the rain and sun, are pretty equally distributed among the just and unjust. What advantage then hath the spiritually minded?

Much every way. There are discernible characteristics of the consciousness of the third dimension and they are of transcendent importance.

1. There is an *indescribable* element in all genuine experiences of the spiritual life. Setting forth the sense of spiritual reality in human speech is like describing a rose-bush by music. The thing is sometimes attempted and the result may be valuable as music, though not as botany. Through symbols and suggestions we try to indicate the unspeakable. Those who have had the experience understand, others hear but empty words. This is the test of the twice-born,

that they listen with understanding to the efforts of spiritual consciousness to express itself through human speech. One man remains cold and indifferent, another eagerly awakens to new hunger for more of the mystic touch in his own life. The more deep and real the experiences of the life of the spirit, the more difficult it becomes to tell what has happened. Through the writings of the mystics of all ages runs this same incomprehensibility of utterance, but always the initiated understand. Vigorous and stimulating are the phrases of the seers of the invisible. "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." "I am the vine and ye are the branches." "I am the true bread sent down from Heaven." "That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." "I saw eternity the other night, like a great ring of spotless white." "Rock of ages cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee." "There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins."

Any attempt at literal interpretation of such language falls into absurdity. Apocalyptic literature has been sadly abused and perverted by a thousand attempts to make the imagery walk on all fours. Spiritual vision and poetic imagination would save us from the multiplied confusions and contradictions of the literal-minded and unseeing.

2. He who comes to a conscious life of spirit attains a satisfying *sense of reality*. Within his own soul he knows that he has at last established vital contact with Reality and with the greater universe and in glorious vividness stands out the great vital sure-

ness of touch with the Truth that *is*. There is in this a consciousness of ultimate Truth and vivid Actuality that transcends all efforts to express what is seen and known. The soul moves out into God's good universe of infinite Power and Light and Life and Love. Indescribable as all this may be, the effort to express it does have the power to make other souls eager to enter the same realm. In this certainty we come to the final answer to the philosopher's question. The Universe *is* friendly and the soul is abundantly welcome. There is a sufficient place prepared and there will be mansions enough for all our needs. Here all questions are in the way of an ultimate answer. Outward expressions indicate that no two individuals enter upon exactly the same experience, but we have no final way of knowing about this for none of us can really know any other experience than his own. To every soul there pertains a possible fulness of stature. We may not reach the spiritual fulness of Isaiah or Saint Francis but it is a glorious thing to attain our own measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ in us. If we ever reach any approximation to what God plans for us, we shall pass far beyond anything that we can now ask or think.

3. He who attains spiritual consciousness comes to a sense of Moral cleanness, a wholeness within that multiplies moral power and courage in a miraculous way. "My strength is as the strength of ten because my heart is pure," and it is ever so. Complete soul-health makes the spirit invulnerable. "Wilt thou be made whole?" has always wakened responses in the

hearts of men who have caught a glimpse of better things. Many a man is sick of his own moral infirmities and eager for release from the body of this death. If bodily health is basic to normal living and rational thinking then moral cleanness is the first requisite of soul health and spiritual soundness. Straight thinking on moral questions becomes impossible so long as there is ethical compromise in a life. Moral soundness and thorough honesty are indispensable factors in soul health and growth. "He shall save his people from their sins."

4. There is a *sense of security* that accompanies the spirit-filled and rises above mere vigour of physical health or material well-being. There is a realisation of safety, of established relations with the All-good and the All-sufficient that does away with the tremblings of timid souls who tip-toe through life in dread of sinister forces that may suddenly awake and destroy them. "No harm can come to me on ocean or on shore," sings Whittier in his modern version of "All things work together for good to them that love God." How much of life's energies are consumed in the struggle with the inner sense of insecurity and dread of the unknown, only those who suffer can know. "I may starve, I may fall ill, I may suffer accident, I may be robbed, I may lose my employment, I may—" but there is no end to the list, every item of which is but a symptom of inner fear to which the soul all its lifetime may be subject.

To this tyranny of terror Jesus spoke a word of comfort. "Let not your heart be troubled—" "Take

no thought (worry) for the morrow." Confidence and trust and security are the privileges of the sons of God. "Perfect love casteth out fear," declares John. If there were no other benefit of the all-sufficient Gospel than this confident trust in Him with whom we have to do, the teaching of Jesus would still be the most priceless boon ever conferred upon a fear-tormented and worry-ridden world.

5. Whatever else the life of the spirit may be, it is distinctly and overwhelmingly a life of personal relation with God. At the heart of it all is a Divine Personality, a Living God, a Heavenly Father. Abstractions may be beautiful and suggestive but they can never take the place of a personal God. It is the Personal Presence that makes faith to become a living, throbbing thing, and transforms service into worship-in-action. For Paul, serving God was transcendently one supreme thing, and that was his personal union with Christ. Christ in him the hope of glory and he in Christ the fulfilment of all that the soul has ever hoped or dreamed or known. That a limited, individual, human will should come to personal fellowship with the Infinite God is a wholly super-rational mystery, but a very real and vivid experience, and the born-again know what it means.

6. There is a *sense of power* in the lives of those who walk in the Spirit. "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." One-time timidity gives way to holy boldness that fears nothing, hopes all things, dares all things, endures all things, having found the secret springs of inexhaustible power. "Ye

shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you." There is no confidence like that of knowing vital contact with an Infinite Personal, unfailing, inflowing, all-sufficient Energy. He reneweth power unto the faint until in renewed strength those who wait upon the Lord mount up with wings like eagles, run without becoming weary, and even find grace enough to walk without fainting. There is holy boldness because there is an inexhaustible surplus of resources in Christ Jesus. The soul has felt the thrill of eternal Energy and knows that there are no limits to the all-sufficient grace. Back of the waterwheel of life is the waterfall of energy, and back of the fall is the stream, and back of the stream, the lake and the rain and the clouds and the winds and all the energies of God's creation. Why then should I lie awake worrying about whether there may be enough water in the universe to out-last the needs of my little wheel?

This sense of fulness and all-sufficiency comes by a thousand channels of experience and sense and intuition. The surf on the sand becomes an abundant overflowing, an endless rolling up on the shores of life of the energies of the great deep out beyond the things that are seen. The tiniest flower that grows has back of it the depth of the soil and all of the sun and the abundance of rain and the Father's own good purpose. The smallest wire may make contact with the main and bring in its measure of light and heat and power. The humblest life may be filled to the brim with all the fulness of God and so bubble over with eternity. "I can't hold much but I can run over a lot," pro-

claimed one happy heart. There is enough and to spare and he who has come to know it, not by reasoning about Infinite Energies, but by experiencing them in his own life, has an assurance that brings strength for every strain and task of life.

7. There is a *sense of Infinite Value* about these moments of clear communion with God. Intermittent and brief though they be for most of us, and transient as they are in nearly all lives, nevertheless their value is beyond all conceivable measure of matter or mind. The soul at last knows the secret treasures and in holy rapture exclaims, "Verily an hour of this is worth an eternity of anything else whatsoever." Now we know what means, "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand." All life, and all lives in the secret, have now an eternal worth and an infinite range. The worm now has wings and, rising above all conceivable measure of value, sees at last Eternal Reality and in that moment tastes the value of all things. All other measures sink into insignificance and drop out of sight. What eye hath not seen nor ear heard God hath revealed to them that love Him, and in that revealing all things at last become clear. Truth, luminant, vibrant, rises to meet the soul. Human speech may fail, but the spirit knows, and confidently knows what it knows, by the sixth sense of spiritual certainty.

That these superlative experiences are not constant in our earthly life is not strange; rather is their intermittent nature a merciful provision for the limits of this beginning stage of eternity. But the single and fleeting moments that the soul passes in delight before

the Great White Throne, shed a radiance and glory over all the rest of life. Doubtless any one who lives to the full the life of the spirit will encounter as many such experiences as may be borne, until we break through the veil of the flesh and see Him face to face. And then, and then . . .

Chapter IX

THE LIBERTY OF THE SPIRIT

THAT a man should deliberately do the thing that he knows to be wrong and against his own best interests, constitutes the moral puzzle of the ages. Mankind may be roughly divided into two classes, those who struggle against the downward pull and others who give up the fight and take life as they find it. Questions of relative freedom, and the whole matter of permitted evil, and the difference between fore-knowledge and causation, and the moral effects of the removal of temptation are beyond the scope of this discussion. It is easy to multiply problems and devise ingenious ways of stating them. Our interest is with the attainment of that victory that overcometh the world.

We begin with frank recognition of the existence of evil and the vulnerability of the human will when assailed by temptation. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." The practical problem is that of the way out. Where philosophy leaves off, Christian faith begins with its initial moral requirements. Practically all forms of religion recognise the existence of evil, but some of them make no effort to eliminate sin from human life, and only one has offered a complete antidote for the moral perversion of the human heart. Moral maxims and ethical precepts

read well and Vedic hymns have poetical value, but when a man falls into the grip of a consuming fire in his moral life it needs something more than a prospective ultimate absorption of personality in the All to "break the power of cancelled sin and set the prisoner free." Contemplation of the abstract virtues may bring in time some relief from the fever and fret of the wheel of desire, but in our hour of trial we need a more effective moral dynamic that will take hold of the inner nature and radically change its dominant desire.

The religion of Jesus makes the only complete and effective provision for this moral transformation that the world has ever known. Not all its adherents, ancient or modern, have understood or practised the far-reaching moral implications and possible moral triumphs of the divine purpose in Christ Jesus. It is, or should be, impossible to listen to Him who spake as never man spake without recognising the divine intention that men should become morally free. Either there is at last a final and complete moral overcoming or we are of all men most miserable, because most deceived.

How then is such overcoming attained? "Through Christ," exclaims the happy convert, accepting Paul's phrase and letting it go at that. Very well, that is really about all the soul needs to know to believe and receive the promised victory. But as we continue in the way, we become more and more interested in the manner of the marvellous workings of that mighty power that overcometh all things.

There is a de-centralising result of this moral triumph. It is not enough to attain the victory over sin merely for the sake of the good results to be received in an individual life. Sin is sin, and all sin is related, and the elimination of sin in the individual means eternal warfare against all sin everywhere. Killing off personal sin merely for one's own benefit is a form of selfishness. It is not enough to say that fire burns and water drowns, therefore keep away from them. If I am careless my neighbour's house also may be burned or his child drowned and I cannot evade my responsibility to keep him from the river and the flames.

It is possible, by purely rational processes, to chart a fairly straight and plain road through the moral requirements of life. Legal procedure follows such a course, enacting laws, fixing penalties, formulating codes. There is no rational necessity for the continuance of any man in his evil ways. The rationalists all along have proclaimed that if men know the right, they will do it. Everybody admits the validity of the moral imperative. Certainly we ought to do that which is right and abhor that which is evil.

What more then is needed? Much every way. Men do know the right and deliberately do the wrong. They eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and straightway choose the evil. Reasonings and moral homilies convince the mind, but they do not change the heart nor vitalise the will. In the end we have a being who knows the right and does the wrong, the eternal incarnation of the seventh chapter of

THE LIBERTY OF THE SPIRIT

Romans, and the consequent doubling of man's guilt. Abstract reason does not make men good, it makes them intelligently guilty.

There is not much moralising in the New Testament, but there is everywhere the inspiration of lives that have overcome, and there is the clear word concerning the means to this victory. "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." Not *as* perfect as God, but perfect in human nature as God is perfect in divine nature. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Jesus "gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity." "Purged by the washing of regeneration," we emerge triumphant from the process and come to be like Him in moral purity of heart and rightness of conduct.

In practice this moral triumph is closely associated with the practice of spiritual fellowship with God. The difficulty comes with the moral gravitation of sin, with its constant downward pull. There is naturally something inside of us that wants to sin. The strength of temptation is the inner desire. Nothing outside a man can tempt him unless it wakens some inward desire to do the forbidden thing. "The prince of this world hath nothing in me," no ground of vantage because there was in the purity of the heart of Jesus no moral compromise on which the "prince" could lay hold. The doors of the heart are unlocked from within if ever at all. Somehow this downward drag

gets a hold on every one of us and wakens within us the desire to do the perverse thing. Reason points the danger, counsels resistance, and promises rewards for overcoming, but reason does not supply any motive force sufficient for the upward struggle.

The secret of it all is in finding an upward lifting power greater than the down-pull and so rise above the level of conscious moral surrender. Here the materialistic and esoteric philosophers break down. "There is no remedy for sin," stated a learned Buddhist priest in answer to a question of the writer. I suggested that Christ has the remedy for sin. "Yes, I have heard of Christ, but every man is his own Christ, and when overcome by our sins the case is hopeless. There is no remedy."

Over against this despair of paganism and impotency of rationalism, stands the lofty standards and the effective dynamic of the New Testament. There is no mistaking the note of triumph, it is the index of the "nth" power of the soul lifted to upper levels and moving through infinite progressions. Theological formulas have helped a little to explain this process of soul-transformation, but in its inner essence, this experience is a matter of personal fellowship with God. It is a simple formula of fact that those who attain this vivid, focused experience of a personal consciousness of God, also achieve the moral triumph. The intimate relation between the soul and God is the power that counteracts the downward pull and sets the prisoner free. "Thy faith hath saved thee."

This moral triumph and spiritual consciousness con-

stitute a definite "way" and its trajectory is an ever upward gradient. Some may enter it suddenly, others by gradual processes, but sooner or later the earnest and persistent soul finds itself travelling the worn path of those who in all ages have followed their glorious Redeemer and attained moral triumph through Him.

What are some of the steps in this highway of holiness? Among the first is a self-knowing that reveals distressing limitations and imperfections of heart and life. Until this painful self-knowing takes place no man understands his own nature. Such knowledge tends to humility, and humility is nothing else than the discovery and recognition of the sad truth about one's self. Follows then a struggle, brief or prolonged, until the soul resolutely turns its back on evil and sets forth to attain the mystic way of communion with God. Shallow souls make short shift of the climb and rest content on low levels. Deeper and sterner natures struggle on to higher levels and are abundantly repaid for doing so. Talk as we may of instantaneous works of grace, there always remains much painful climbing, with many a slip and stumble, before we attain the upper levels and enter the fulness that filleth all and in all.

Come there does, at some point, a triumph of final surrender when the soul forsakes all and is "lost in love." Various are the forms of this experience of reality, but there does come in some form a consciousness of the all-sufficiency of God as a realised Personality through direct communion, independent of testimony, opinions, reasonings, or indirect revelations.

Contemplation becomes the exercise of the spirit as meditation is that of the mind. No one can maintain a constant exercise of consciousness on this higher level. None of life's greatest experiences are constant and continuous. But one such mount of transfiguration may shed radiance over years of life and transform completely a human character. The tragedy of it is that a single unsundered sin in a life may break the contact and destroy the life of the spirit.

Reason may lead us to the door of this glorious palace of spiritual consciousness, but reason has no key with which to enter and find the victory that overcometh unto the uttermost. On this level of spiritual consciousness we find a motive force sufficient for all the moral demands of life, and in the sure knowing of those who are born of the Spirit, we hear the triumphant shout, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Chapter X

THE MOTIVE FORCE

"WHICH is the great commandment?" asked the scribe and the answer reached far beyond his expectations. For technical comparisons of moral rules Jesus had little time, but for first principles and spiritual motive forces He had the decisive word. And the experience of love to God and man becomes the driving power of all effective spiritual living. The practice of mysticism as solitary contemplation has high usefulness and leads us to the Source of all good, but we need some means of communicating that All Good to men.

The missionary spirit of Christianity is but one phase of its strong social spirit. A non-missionary and non-evangelistic Christianity is a contradiction of terms. When the spirit of propaganda dies, the cause soon dies with it. For the new social conscience of the Apostolic Church, a communion with God that did not extend to other people the benefits received was considered radically defective. When the fire burned most brightly on the altars of the church at Antioch, the Spirit said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." "Wherefore, I beseech you, brethren, be ye reconciled to God," is the evangelistic word of a soul that has been consciously caught up into the upper heavens and has seen

and heard the indescribable, wherefore the exhortation.

There are two principle methods of propaganda for all human causes. We may bring our fellows around to our position by force, or by persuasion. Force in whatever form or realm is the method of materialism. If our personal or political neighbours do not conduct themselves as we wish, the big stick or the big guns will assure conformity. No principle in all history has ever had more complete demonstration than this. Whatever we think of the expediency of militarism as a method of settling disputes, we know clearly what its results are going to be. The results are increasingly horrible with the advancing science of chemicals and control of the air. Militarism has never been so thoroughly discredited as in this day of disillusionment and disgust with its wanton destruction of every human value.

2 The other method is that of persuasion. If thy neighbour differ with thee, persuade him. Reason with him, and by clear arguments show him that he is in the wrong and ought to change his ways.

Each of these methods needs something to make it effective. The motive force of militarism is destruction. The motive force of reason is love. Vigorous threats will avail nothing unless we can back them up with effective blows. Torture in some form is the driving power of force.

Nor will reason alone accomplish very much with men. In actual practice we do not direct our conduct by what we know we ought to do as much as by what

we wish to do. Arguments merely confirm both sides and rarely convince anybody. Reason always needs a working power to make it effective, and the one effective power is love.

Militarism in aggressive form sometimes finds its way into some of the churches. Not that militant ritualism that is seeking control of public education and public office and public money; that is another matter. But there is a party that insists on teaching that final moral adjustments are to come through a militaristic return of Jesus to earth to set up a temporal kingdom at some place to be selected. The Prince of Peace is to initiate and lead a bloody campaign in which all His enemies shall be ground under His feet; the earth is to be drenched in blood, and "righteousness is to be forced upon mankind." The Church, or the "elect," are to take up the sword and go forth to conquer.

Such doctrine needs little discussion on the part of those who understand the spirit of Jesus. Apparently some have missed entirely the teaching concerning the new birth, the life of fellowship, the place of conscious experience, and the essential spirit of the kingdom that is "within you" and that is to come without observation.

How great the need of some sufficient power to make effective the whole Christian polemic, every pastor, missionary and teacher knows full well. Love is that power. "The Spirit that worketh through love," is the quickening element in that faith that overcometh the world. "Love is the fulfilling of the law," also the driving power of all persuasion to obey the law.

If we love God, we will keep His commandments and do our utmost to extend His kingdom. "God may be loved, but not thought," said the medieval mystic. "For God so loved—" love was and is the expression of God to men. God spoke to men through intelligence, but far more clearly through that inspiration that overflows the heart and is recognised as love. If the life of the spirit is ever to break the shell that imprisons the human heart it will be through love. If perverse and evil men are ever to be turned from their wicked ways, it will be more often through love than by fear. If ever the enraptured soul, having tasted the good things of God, is to communicate any of them to other people, it will be by love more than by intellectual declarations. Certainly it will not be by means of the mailed fist. When a throbbing heart finds itself without words to express its overflow, the very dumbness may be more eloquent than reasoned statements. What little we do get from the initiated comes more in the form of love than of definite statements. That was the difficulty with John on Patmos. Many and sad have been the blunders of men who have tried to interpret literally the phrases and figures and phantasies of the book of Revelation, but out of it all comes the gracious benediction of the closing chapters.

What then means this greatest of the commandments? Simply this; that love is the answer, the solvent of the problems of life. Love is that upward-pulling gravitation that counteracts the downward pull of the lower nature. When a man loves God and his fellow men, commandments have no menace for his life. He

serves God and does righteousness because he wants to live that way. And knowing such love, he burns to communicate something of it to others.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." As thyself—not more nor less. A man should strive as earnestly to bring to others what he has found as he has striven to find it for himself. There is but one way to do it and that is to love men as Jesus Christ Himself loved them.

We have missed the point because it is too simple, the old trouble. No one can attain a monopoly on love and sell it out to distressed souls and dying sinners at bargain rates. No ritual or ceremony can convey love and no ecclesiastical monopoly can for a price distribute love to the faithful.

We have two great problems to solve: what shall we believe? and what shall we do to satisfy the moral requirements of the universe? We may work up to these problems from below by a sort of reasoning approach that starts from a cold interest and ends in a gospel of negative commandments. Or we can approach these problems from above and in a spirit of love shed abroad in our hearts and lifting us above negations.

What shall we believe? What of the doctrine? Reasonings together may clear up some matters, but the will to accept and follow the commands of reason must always come from something above and superior to reason, and that super-something is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. Historical Christianity has given us several answers to this question of ultimate

authority in belief. First, the Church and its creeds was declared to be the final word. Then Luther and others after him declared that the Book in its final canonical form must be the ultimate rule of belief and conduct. That was better. But if holy men of old were inspired to write, then He who inspired them must be greater than they and therefore the Spirit of God, our Counsellor, our Redeemer and Guide, must be the ultimate source of authority. "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." How then shall we know? "If any man is willing to do his will, he shall know of the teaching." "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." "We know," claims John again and again. Willingness to do His will comes through love and love only, and love becomes the requisite condition of spiritual certainty. To men who love God supremely is conceded a sixth sense of truth, a recognition of higher values, a corrected spiritual discernment that leads into all truth. When a human will has been merged in God's will, its possessor will wait only for the word of truth to give himself thereto.

What to do? What of the law, of the eternal framework of moral relations and obligations, of the fundamental ethical order of the universe? Which is the right way? How decide all the questions of right and wrong in daily conduct? By love. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." "If ye love me, keep my commandments." The dynamic of a loving heart rises triumphant above the reasoned moralities that have nothing to make them go. Without some effective

motive force, good resolutions vanish in thin air and strong determinations, in the hour of trial, crumple into non-resistance. Duty is an impotent word before the surge of temptation, and a needless word when the melting power of Divine love has dissolved the icy opposition of the unregenerated heart.

The law has no terrors and few instructions for a lover. To love supremely is to find the corrective for the moral compass of life. Inner desire, not outer compulsion, is the most effective motive force of the universe. Presumably a man may come to doubt that he loves his wife. If he is a legally minded individual he might possibly go before a notary public and swear to an affidavit that he does really love her who bears his name, hoping thus to settle the question once for all. Having properly framed the document, he might hang it on the wall of his house so that in moments of doubt he could refer to it and once more be assured that he loves his wife. Yet such methods would be no more absurd than the literalism that tries by iron-clad creeds and cold formulas and assorted proof texts to come to spiritual certainty. No man can prove that he loves his wife, but if he does love her everybody will know it. No man can prove much of anything concerning the life of the spirit, but if his soul has entered in, no one will doubt it.

Chapter XI

THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD

BETWEEN the down-drag of the materialists and the side-pull of the psychologists, it is not always easy to keep our thinking steady. Besides, we have to reckon with the tendency of the theologians to describe experience in befogging terms of dogma. We need both a road toward God and light by which to travel therein. Correctness of creed will not save a soul from darkness if there be no lamp for the path or glow in the heart. If conscious union of the soul with God be the ultimate end of all spiritual life, then a lot of other things are of secondary importance. Men of widely variant creeds and strangely separated rituals have, each for himself and in his own way, found the gleam and followed it to experience the daybreak of the soul. Catholic, mystic, calvinist, evangelical, transcendentalist, learned and untaught, bond and free, all have "caught fire and found the splendour there."

Under various forms men have found their way to the great Essential, and made the quest of the Eternal the main business of life. Unity of personality, under whatever name, has ended the strife of desires and the conflict of emotions. He who clings to his present unspiritual life shall certainly lose his larger and uni-

fied personality in God. There is a story of a French locomotive with one great boiler and two separate engines beneath. When assembled and fired up ready for the trial, the machine refused to move. Various efforts resulted in nothing, until the entire engine was lifted from the track, when it was discovered that the valves of one engine had been set to run forward and the other backward, and each completely neutralised the other. Many a human personality struggles on through the years, locked by internally opposed forces of character.

It is vain to talk of high attainments until life forces are freed from inner oppositions and set to some definite end. Why talk of dominant life motives to a man whose spirit is a human battle ground for the conflicting forces of a distracted personality! The idea that one's life has some place in the universe and a mission to humanity belongs distinctly to the gospel of a unified personality and rarely comes to the surface of consciousness in a disorganised being. Of what use to speak of a mission in life to a man who has achieved no mastery of his own passions? The primary necessity is that of attaining a personality that has something to give. Having received nothing we can give nothing, and having attained no mastery within, we can undertake no mission without. The first question is whether we are in the way of God's eternal purpose. The world is full of derailed souls, arriving nowhere.

No one has stated the central principle of this unifying process as did Jesus when He said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these (other) things shall

be added unto you." First things in first places, that is the secret. First things in first places and all other good things will naturally fall into their own places, and life will be unified and harmonious. But once let some good second thing get into first place, and life falls into discord and disorganisation. There is but one first thing in the life of the spirit. He who allows any doctrinal interest, any organisational enthusiasm, any special activities, any denominational zeal, or even any evangelistic service to usurp the first place that belongs to the soul's own inner fellowship with God, will find his life going lame and halt, and if he moves forward at all, he will crawl where he should leap and run.

This life of communion does not realise itself automatically, but begins and continues by exercise of conscious attention thereto. The flabby and indifferent can never inherit the kingdom of God, nor, having once tasted the good word of life, can a soul continue therein without laying aside every weight and running with patience and vigour the heavenly race. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord."

Two and a half centuries ago there lived in a monastery in France a humble monk, known as "Brother Lawrence." His early years were rough and wild and gave him no more education than the ability to read and write and enter simple accounts. He served several years as a soldier, was converted and entered a monastery, where he was assigned the duties of cleaning the pots and pans in the kitchen. This was no exalted setting for a life of highest privilege and experi-

ence, but from his kitchen scullery Brother Lawrence has left us an extraordinarily rich and suggestive record of his daily fellowship with God. The secret of it all, according to this humble mystic, lies in constant conversation with God while one is going about his regular daily tasks. Not every one can follow an occupation so free from mental preoccupation as this washer of kettles, but every one can find some time during the day for "little conversations" with God and in these moments of fellowship, Brother Lawrence found the secret of all that is spirit and life. "Tell Him everything, do everything to His glory and count every experience, no matter how insignificant it be, a direct service rendered to God," he advises us. "Conversing with God is not a matter to be put off until there is time for it or until the heart be free for it, or we shall seldom give Him our thoughts or attention. And we should direct our thoughts to Him the oftenest we can, even though it be for but a brief moment."

By such simple and sincere methods the old monk did develop a remarkable and constant consciousness of God, and so doing entered into a life of extraordinary richness and beauty. It may be objected that such a life was deficient on the social side, but he was a child of his age and, even so, in the midst of the extreme individualism of a monastery, he did well the duties assigned to him and treated with kindness and unselfishness all with whom he came in personal contact. Certainly if he needed the constant communion with God for the restricted life of his time, we of the complex and frenzied to-day much more need to learn

the secret of that inner fellowship that alone can sustain the soul amid the strenuous demands of our hurried lives.

By this daily practice of the presence of God, and only thus, may we redeem consciousness from the lower levels to which it gravitates if there be no continued upward lift. Here comes in the moral discipline of conscious willingness to do the will of God, of constantly holding the attention on things divine till it turns there as instinctively as the flowers to the light. By living in the fellowship of the Spirit, we come more and more within the gravitation range of the spiritual realm, and the drag of the flesh weakens as the years go by.

This constant living with God is no idle day-dreaming or self-centred reverie. The test is simple and pragmatic. "By their fruits ye shall know them." "What fruit doest thou bring from thy vision?" asks Jacopone da Todi. "An ordered life in every state," he answers. Failing this result, we know that something is wrong, we have missed the way. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and where these abound, we discover the Eternal Spring of the water of life. We may not yet have come to all the fulness of these harvests, but to realise the vast value of what we do possess, we have only to compare our inward peace and steadfast purposes with the restless misery of millions of men whose lives are continually torn by the distractions and divisions of a personality that never attained to unity. How bitter are the hearts

of multitudes of men we never suspect until in an unguarded moment we catch the echoes of inner strife.

There is no magic formula for this practice of the presence of God; it is simply a matter of constant and frequent paying attention to God. Brother Lawrence had the secret of it, "frequent little conversations," with a constant effort to realise more and more the infinite goodness and wisdom and grandeur and love of God. But just here we need help, and, thanks be to God, here help comes. Until it does come we struggle a little until God says something to us and in that something comes the fulness. We may put into the censer everything that we can, our ideals, our energies, our duty, our sacrifices, but until the fire falls it will be a dead sacrifice. But when the devotement is made, something does happen, the fire does fall and there is warmth and light in all the heart! Divine Love is born anew in a human soul, and in the glory and glow of it Love goes out to seek and to serve other men. That is what happened at Pentecost and it is what has happened a million times since. It will happen again whenever a soul comes into living union with God, and waits till the coal from off the altar kindles the inner fire of the heart. Service now becomes an eager outreach to help some one else. The Bible becomes a light to the feet and a lamp to the path; a marvellous chart of The Way! In the full glory of this light Paul exclaimed, "And who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long,

we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us."

"Who shall separate us?" No one shall separate us and nothing can separate us, except—the tragedy of it—except our own carelessness and neglect of constant communion with Him.

Chapter XII

THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE Old Testament has been a much misunderstood book. Against the background of ancient paganism we read the records of God's dealings with men and of man's reach upward toward God. But confusion arises from every effort to make this literature serve ends for which it never was written. "The word of the Lord is perfect, *converting the soul*"; that is its purpose, and in this its perfection is sublime and permanent. It is a matter of giving the ancient record a chance to do its own work. Majestic and dynamic are the counsels of old, and their radiance and revelation reach down to to-day, but that does not make them textbooks on geology or astronomy. The struggle over Genesis would be comic were it not so tragic for those who misread its story. The marvel is that the writer of Genesis, in an age antedating all modern ideas of development, did nevertheless arrange the successive stages of life in a regular, orderly, progressive development culminating in man. It will be time to find fault with Genesis after we explain this astonishing circumstance. In some form we have the first-man-and-woman story in nearly all ancient literature, which in itself is something to think about.

But there is this vast gulf of difference between Genesis and every other creation story. The others people the earth and air and sea with spirits and devils of many sorts, and there is little spiritual message in these traditions of men. Crudely materialistic and animistic are the traditions and myths of the Egyptians and Greeks and Persians and the American Indians. Here Genesis stands alone and supreme. "In the beginning," chants the record, "God created the heavens and the earth," and this God-as-Creator message comes to us only in Genesis. The spiritual note marks the first sentence of the book.

There follows at once the setting forth of a direct personal relation between man and God. These first people walked and talked with God, and they found sin a wall of separation. The moral emphasis dominates another unique feature of Genesis. Possibly the ancient writers knew something of these legends of other literatures and with inspired vision re-wrote them in their eternal truth and spiritual verity. And possibly the Hebrew story found its way elsewhere and was corrupted by pagan ideals and barbarian morals. Certainly the record of Genesis could not have been written in more perfect form for use in all ages. Where didactic formulas or scientific dogmas would have perished with the passing age, the living human-divine story stands for all time.

All of which is to say that the key to Genesis lies in its dominant note of spiritual life and moral responsibility. Blot out all reference to these two things and

the book is meaningless. Read it as it was written and it stands a sublime declaration of the relation between man and the upper world of spirit and life.

Back of the ceremonialism of the Old Testament lies a spiritual idealism that works a moral regeneration. In the rise and fall of Israel, the drama of reward and punishment, the rejection of the Divine Voice, and the response to the eternal invitation to seek the Lord while He may be found and call upon Him while he is near, we have the unsurpassable record of the pathway of the human spirit in its struggle upward and God-ward. All through the record weaves in and out the history of the human spirit in its dealings with God and the revelation of God in his workings with men. Such a record, written by many men widely separated by time and race and viewpoint, could attain unity only through some great underlying motive that binds the threads into a cable of truth. Such a unity does exist, and if we fail to find it the whole collection becomes a jumble of unrelated stories.

The unifying key to the Old Testament is its revelation of the life of the spirit under ordinary and extraordinary human conditions. Some men attained the level of intercourse with God and others failed, often miserably, to attain this upper consciousness, or once gained, to retain it. A thousand things enter into the records, but they are all reported with regard to their moral relations. Men rose and fell and sinned and served and suffered, but their records stand or fall in relation to that third level of consciousness from which

all good and all evil appear at last in true perspective and all conduct and experience are adjudged in justice and truth.

Whence came the shadowy ceremonialism and the symbolic ritual of the Jewish temple? By direct fiat, says the record. But to whom did the skies speak the fiat? Certainly not to dull ears, grubbing the earth or defrauding their fellows. The ritual of Judaism was established by men who walked close enough to God to hear His voice and glimpse the outline of His plans and to try honestly to set up what they conceived as His kingdom. Sacrifices and penances there were, and still are, in every pagan creed and worship, but these things in paganism sink their followers deeper in the mire of sensuality and despair. The smoking altars of Judea point steadily onward and upward to the ultimate truth that the sacrifices of God are a broken and contrite heart. The only men who rise above the literalism of sacrifice and see beyond the symbol the transcendent reality are those who have attained the spirit level of consciousness and so come to know what meaneth these things.

That many men whose names appeared in the record failed to attain the level of full understanding is not strange. These imperfect followers of the Light often failed of clear moral vision, and could not understand why the God of love and mercy should not take pleasure in the death of the wicked, nor punish men in His wrath, nor rejoice in the slaughter of His enemies. The human and sometimes unethical God of the Old Testament writers is the natural result of their

very imperfect understanding of the Being who dwelleth in light that no man can approach unto. Some of the preposterous militaristic ideas present in modern forms of Christian propaganda make it easy for us to understand the ideas of jealousy, revenge, and hatred that creep into the ancient record.

Nevertheless the spiritual idealism of the ancient writers was ages ahead of any other spiritual leadership the world had ever known. The note of spiritual authority, the "thus saith the Lord," commanded attention if not always obedience. Two-dimension men have never readily yielded respectful attention to those who have attained the, to them, incomprehensible level of spiritual consciousness and speak what they know by spiritual certainty. The note of mystic personal communion with God forever marks the Old Testament as distinctly removed from every other ancient book. Recognise and realise the spirit-life that runs through every page, and its great characters become prophets of eternity and its records of experience become a chart of the highway cast up for the progress of the nations and the emancipation of the fettered feet of weary men. The Old Testament is the record of the progressive revelation of the third consciousness of the world of spirit in the hearts of men who are willing to receive Him whom they at first discerned in the shadows of the garden and whom, with lengthening experience, they came to know in increasing fulness of the union of the human heart with their eternal Refuge and Strength.

The Old Testament moral history of mankind re-

veals the hopelessness of any moral enlightenment or development apart from this lifting of the level of consciousness to a super-sensual and super-intellectual level. These old time stories of human weakness and failure seem singularly without excuse. So does every moral failure, told impartially and accurately. These are imperishable records of the conduct reactions of the human heart under the universal motives of human experience, and ever out of it all appears the overwhelming certainty that sin is sin and ends in ruin. Men who do not reach the spirit level still act in exactly the same way. Nowhere have we so vivid a demonstration of the weakness of legalism to change human nature or the failure of ritualism to lead men all the way through to God. These things were in their places good and useful, as schoolmasters, but they could at best lead men to the doors of the temple of Spirit and Life; each man must enter the Holy of Holies for himself. The great lesson of it all is this, that men have won out in the struggle with sin and self-centredness in proportion as they have attained the mystical union with God, and where they have failed in this they have failed in all.

And what of these giant souls who walked with God and learned of Him? Few are the clear details given us of their experiences or their method of approach to God, but they are as definite as any other records of an experience that is not translatable into human speech. Enoch walked with God, but left us no records other than that his communion was so complete that God took him. Like every fragment that breaks

through from the unseen and untellable, this suggestion is worth a volume of mechanical description. Abraham wrote no books, but the brief record of his life towers across the centuries as the imperishable testimony of a man who believed God and thus attained righteousness and a place in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. Noah was a man of action, but action that grew out of a perception of God's purposes and faith for a new start for humanity. Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, men who somehow caught the gleam of things divine and followed after it. In Moses we find a definite picture of a great soul who had to struggle with the weakness of his own nature and the universal perversions of the human heart, and out of it all found abiding strength in the Everlasting Arm and out of problems and difficulties insuperable, wrought moral victories for all the coming ages. For such triumphs it was worth while to endure afflictions with the people of God (and a perverse lot they were) rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

For all these super-rational paradoxes of the life of the spirit there is but one explanation, the attainment of a definite spiritual consciousness. They all endured as seeing Him who is invisible. There we have it in irreducible minimum. The list might be indefinitely extended of what men have seen and done through realisation of that which "the world's coarse thumb and finger failed to plumb."

Is the Old Testament a deeply spiritual book? It is nothing else. The glory that shines from its pages is the light of the Eternal Spirit reflected in the hearts

of receptive men. Its darker shadows are the failures of sinning men to receive the Light. Its tragedies are the rejection of the Spirit of God by men who choose to go their own perverse ways. The always present unifying purpose in all the Book is the soul's response to the Voice of the Lord, whether perceived directly, or through the messages of those who did enter in and know, and then spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Over and above the stumblings and strivings of ordinary and representative men peals the eternal anthem of old:

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

The hymnbook of the Jewish church has never been, and doubtless never will be, surpassed as an accurate and revealing expression of the highest and deepest experiences of the human heart. While the world stands thirsty-souled men will ever turn to the matchless interpretations of David and Moses and Isaiah and Asaph that they may again drink of that river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of our God. For it is eternally and imperishably true that,

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High,
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

Chapter XIII

THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is possible to miss the main emphasis of the New Testament. The writers of the first Christian Century mark a new spiritual development and their lives and words register a new consciousness of union with God. Following the long conflict between the downward drag of sensualism and self-will and the upward vision and challenging voice of the prophets, appear these new and vigorous exponents of a spiritual consciousness in Christ.

Prior to the beginning of the Christian era, no man had ever gone all the way in devotement to the life of the Spirit. There were Davids and Samsons and Moseses but they all failed at some point. Humanity could not produce a personality one hundred per cent. abandoned to the realisation of spiritual consciousness, and it was yet to be demonstrated that a complete giving up of self to this consciousness of God would solve in a new way all the problems of existence. There were two difficulties: no man could do it, and if done the doer would bring destruction upon himself.

Jesus Christ appeared on earth and made this test and the record stands unchallenged. At least we *know* what it means. Jesus did attain the last full measure

of devotion to the Father's will and the act cost Him his life, but in so doing He opened for all men the pathway through to God and rent forever the veil of uncertainty that hung between the dim soul and the realities of the Spirit. Henceforth there is a possible reconciliation between God and every man.

Jesus cleared up the whole realm of spiritual consciousness. No man can enter upon a consciousness the terms of which are constructively beyond his comprehension. If one speaks of a sixth sense, we ask him what it is like. Is it like hearing or seeing, or what? Perhaps one may tell us something of the results in his own life of the exercise of such a faculty, and so help us a little, but much of our effort to tell men of the realities beyond the range of the things physically and intellectually known falls flat, because there is no basis of comparison nor comprehensible terms of description.

Jesus Christ did appear and we have a standard, one that we can at least begin to understand. He died for our transgressions, and we have a comprehensible measure of the all-sufficient power of that love that is the motive force of the realm of spiritual reality. More light and understanding has been thrown upon the universe of the spirit by the life and death of Jesus than from all other sources combined. Men dead in trespasses and sins, like all dead men, could attain no understanding of the terms and the measure of life. A soul that has lived in two dimensions only is as yet dead in its upper nature.

To know, even imperfectly, Jesus Christ, is to enter

upon a quickening of the inner life. A restless hunger of soul disturbs the normal trend of things. Material things lose their grip and no longer satisfy the deeper longing. Presumably a worm may crawl contentedly on the earth until primitive impulses within begin to unfold waiting wings; after that no butterfly could be content to crawl. After a man sees Jesus he knows there is something better than crawling and grovelling here below, "fond of our earthly toys." It was the opening up to all men of The Way that broke the strangle-hold of the past and ushered in the new era for mankind.

The effect of this life of reality and conscious union with God brought to a group of men a great new hope, the nature of which they did not understand. Political and personal self-interest had ever been woven in the old Jewish system, and down to the present day we still have the ever-recurring reversion to the idea of a temporal kingdom with a visible and localised King reigning somewhere. No wonder that the disciples had hard work to discard an idea that was basic in the thinking of the centuries. Not till after the break with the visible order, with the ascension of Jesus into the heavens, and the unusual manifestations of Pentecost opened a new spiritual understanding, did men begin to see that the all-inclusive mission of Jesus Christ was to establish and gain access to God. His real purpose was to break down the barriers and demonstrate that any man who wills to do the will of Him may know of the teaching, and may come into living conscious union with God Himself. Not empire or ex-

altation, nor adulation nor ecstasy nor paradise is the end of the mission of Jesus Christ, but that men might know God and know Him by direct personal communion, and this is the answer to the problems of human life.

Slow they were of heart to believe and comprehend what Jesus meant. And men have continually lost sight of His message and His ministry and read into His teachings and His actions such things as they have desired to find there. Witness High Mass in the Cathedral in the name of Him who had not where to lay His head, and was despised and rejected of men. Witness bloody wars of aggression waged by men in the name of the Prince of Peace. Witness mutually exclusive denominational doctrinal emphasis, each maintained in the name of Him who said that the one duty of man is to love God with all his heart and his neighbour as himself. Witness the vast bulk of preaching and teaching and date-keeping and incense-smelling that has no relation to the main business of the spiritual kingdom of God. How much of our religious propaganda is confined to the two concerns of doctrine and duty?

Yet some of them did break through and prove that others could follow in the steps that lead to Calvary. Not many attained the heights nor tasted the full joys, but the few that did opened the kingdom of heaven to all who would enter. Drop out of the New Testament this note of triumph, this shout of them that have overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and we lose the meaning of it all. The gospels are our invaluable road-

directions of Him who opened the highway for the spirits of men.

Of the authors of the epistles be it said that their imperishable contribution to humanity is not their apologetic, nor their philosophy, nor their religious education, but their revealing of the workings of the life of the Spirit in the heart of man. How well they did this, Paul and John and Peter and the unknown writer of Hebrews, we know by the grateful testimony of an innumerable cloud of witnesses in all ages since Pentecost. Clearly understood, the major purpose and achievement of these letters is the setting forth of the life of the Spirit, its entrance conditions, its difficulties, its snares and pitfalls, its temptations and its motives and hold-backs, its hopes and aspirations, its more intimate longings, and its most exalted experiences of fellowship with Christ. There is nothing approaching this in all other literature. Absolutely unique is this guide book of the soul in its revelation of a consciousness of God possible for every man. Where pagan philosophers and mystics groped their way dimly through the shadows, these spirit-filled men walked in the open with sure step, and they tell us definitely how we too may walk in the light, even as He is in the light. Henceforth no man need stumble, unless it be that because of his love of evil, he chooses darkness rather than light. And this life of the spirit is luminous, for the Light of the world is Jesus.

Much of the New Testament is written in the symbolism of the age from which it came, thus bringing sometimes a little confusion to our modern, literalis-

tic methods of interpretation, but one need not hesitate long before finding the key to these expressions, saturated with the life of human beings like unto ourselves. True, we are often unable to know just what these teachers are describing, but what they do say brings to us a conviction that there does exist, within the soul's reach, a universe of Reality and "we long, how we long to be there!" And once we know, by our own inner consciousness, that such a world exists, it is for the newly awakened spirit to set forth on the quest for that union with God that finally answers all questions and satisfies all desires.

These seers of the New Testament turned a flood of light in upon the deeper and dominant problems of the soul. We have at last an adequate and satisfying interpretation of life itself, in terms of its highest spiritual values and most enduring realities. For most of us life is much like a house of many rooms, darkened and full of strange and elaborate furniture. Groping our way by sense-perception and logical reasonings through the house, we slowly establish certain pathways from place to place, and by care manage to avoid continued repetition of some of our most serious blunders. Painfully we grope our way about when all the time what we need is light, and all things will fall into ordered and useful place. And this is just what the New Testament illumination of the realm of spirit does, it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

To change the figure, the life of the spirit has been compared to the "breath of life" and no man will

claim that he has no time to breathe. Light, breath, water of life, food, strength, various but consistent are the figures of speech that describe the way in which the inner experience clears up the problems of existence and brings all things into orderly and harmonious relation.

All this illumination of the totality of human experience by the radiance of that Ultimate Reality that is God, is not left to us in abstruse philosophical formulas, but in terms of the common life of the everyday man of the first century. Any man can read and comprehend something of what they are talking about. Common to all ages are these terms of life and experience, and this is the universal language of the spirit. Men think variously and argue diversely, and often define in contradictions. But in all times and in all places they sin and suffer and repent and rejoice and serve and sacrifice and seek after God by the same essential processes. What helped the believers at Antioch and Ephesus will open the way to final triumphs for the dweller in London or Smith's Corners or Zene-gambia. The realm of spirit with its unsearchable riches is open to all men everywhere on equal terms.

John and Paul have left us substantial help in dealing with the six or seven problems of human existence. In all ages thinking men have tried to formulate some answer to such questions as, Who is God? What is man? How can sins be forgiven? Why do the righteous suffer? Am I my brother's keeper? What in life has most worth? If a man die, shall he live again?

These are the eternal challenges of human under-

standing, and until some satisfactory solution is discovered, man only wanders about in the dark, bruising himself on the furniture. In some form every thinker comes into violent contact with the problem of conscious personality of the Divine nature, of the ethical possibility of forgiveness, of the whole question of undeserved suffering, of social responsibility, of life's main values, and of mortality. Only an animal intelligence can ignore these questions, and only a supermind can answer them. What we need is light and most of these questions will answer themselves in clear vision of their real nature and implications. We stumble because of the darkness.

The answer to all these problems is that every one of them runs up into the realm of spiritual consciousness, and that the key to the whole riddle of human experience is the fact that only as we take into account man's spiritual capacity and immortal destiny, can we make anything of this present anomalous position in the universe. Considered as a candidate for union with God and for an extending spiritual consciousness, man's present position and the problems over which he stumbles suddenly come to new meaning. Every one of them has its place and its use.

Who is God? Obviously no intelligible answer is possible if we leave out of account the realm of spirit, and try to think of man as a superintelligent animal. God is eternal living spirit. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." God is "all and in all and blessed forevermore." "God is," we postulate, but there is no intelli-

gible key to what and who God is except that which locates His nature in the realm of spirit, and light, and life, and consciousness above the working of the merely rational processes known to the human mind. The deepest and greatest thing we know about God is that He is like Christ, and that changes everything for all of us.

What is man? The image of God made in His likeness and adapted to attain correspondence with God. Unless a man be potentially a living soul, a quickened spirit, he is a helpless misfit and a total moral liability in the universe. The explanation of all that man is, appears in man's recurrent upward reach; his persistent defiance of moral gravitation.

How may sins be forgiven, and by whom? On the "nature" plane of existence there is no forgiveness at all. On grounds of reason we may imagine a penalty paid by the culprit or by some one else, and in some such crude way the account squared, and the prisoner freed. But even so, the released culprit needs some power to go out and lead a renewed life, to succeed where before he failed. The trouble with some of our theories of the atonement is that they have been conceived and constructed on the purely rational level of intellect, and have wholly left out of account the only explanation by which we can come to any effective atonement at all. As a living spirit capable of communion and fellowship with God, man is redeemable and forgivable, and being forgiven, may go out to live like a son of God. On any other basis of thinking there can be no forgiveness at all.

Why do the righteous suffer undeserved pain? On the animal side of existence we soon exhaust the uses of pain, a warning of possible ill, and a deterrent from unwise and harmful acts. Go as far as we may on this road, we soon reach a point where the case breaks down and we find no jurisdiction for a degree of suffering wholly unexplainable on any grounds of expediency. Why the agonies of death? the pains of childbirth? the needless sufferings of the millions of life forms which never survive at all beyond the briefest span of existence? If there be no super-world of Spirit and of Truth, where the accounts are fully balanced, then are we of all men most miserable because most deceived and misled. That there is no final logical demonstration of this thesis of an upper realm where the crooked is finally made straight and the rough places smooth, does not invalidate the case for the soul that has tasted for itself the good word of Life, for with that upper and inner and final certainty the soul knows that there is at the heart of all things Eternal Justice and that the Judge of all the earth will do that which is right. The vindication lies in the realm of Spirit and of Truth, and other than this no vindication exists. For him whose Vindicator liveth, all things shall be made right.

Am I my brother's keeper? How is social responsibility to be determined and to what extent? Am I to make my own interests subservient to those of other men? Where is the final form for the judging of social problems that have remained unanswered through all human history? On the animal level it is

every creature for itself, and the survival of the strongest. We know well the familiar answer. As rational being, man may be conceived to entertain certain obligations to his fellows, but those obligations cannot logically be pushed further than is good for the self-interest of the individual. There is no individualistic reason whatever for sacrifice on my part in the interest of another unless in some way that sacrifice brings back to me more than it costs, in which case, of course, it ceases to be sacrifice at all and stands revealed as selfish investment. Only as we penetrate another realm of existence and a higher moral consciousness, can we find the beginnings of a justification for preferring one another in love and depriving one's self of needed advantages for the sake of others. If we claim that the perpetuation of the race or the wider good of the species demands individual sacrifice, then we reply by asking what rationale there may be for the carrying on of a species if it means a continued succession of losses and suffering to its individuals? The answer to the whole problem of social relations lies in the realm of spiritual consciousness, where God Himself becomes a being capable of infinite sacrifice, and a Spirit essentially social, coexisting with other beings. On this plane all existence is social; no man can live unto himself alone, and we stand or fall together as a whole. It is not a question of myself *vs.* the other man, but of existence at all, in any adequate sense, in a universe where all existence is finally indissolubly interwoven and interdependent. To fail to attain this fellowship and citizenship with the saints and with God, is to

incur eternal death. To cut one's self off from the universe and go out in endless solitary selfishness is the supreme tragedy of all existence. Our citizenship is in Heaven, and if we are citizens at all we are fellow-citizens, and so children of the King.

"What in life has most worth?" History has given various answers. Riches, pleasure, honours, fame, military prowess, political power, beauty; they all perish with the using. Nor has the *mind* of man discovered any permanent value that satisfies the conditions of the problem. "The greatest of the commandments," said Jesus, "is, thou shalt love," and in love we have a new angle of approach to the whole problem of supreme values. Love, love intense and all-consuming, to God and to one's neighbour—as to one's self. And love is the expression-medium of the world of spiritual consciousness; love stripped of its sensual elements, freed from its rational limitations; love as free expression of the Spirit's own life of Reality. Love, and love alone, is the answer to the problem of supreme values.

If a man die shall he live again? Here materialism is silent, and rationalism offers at best a few analogies and possibilities. The human heart throbs with a deathless hope of an existence beyond the grave, that somewhere, somehow, we must find something more than analogy of worm and butterfly, and unsatisfied longing of hearts that have never attained a full cycle of life in this present world. Somewhere we feel there must be vouchsafed unto us something more than a Pisgah view of the land of promise into which we are

not permitted to enter. But one real answer has rung out across the ages; "Ever and anon a trumpet sounds from the hid battlements of Eternity," and at the sound of that trumpet the heart suddenly knows that there is a life beyond. A pulsing power surges through the life that is hid with Christ in God, and we know of a truth that we have made connections with eternity. We have stretched out our empty hands in the darkness of our narrow limits and have touched a hand warm and strong, and we know that we are not alone in the universe. We have stilled our souls in the presence of death and disaster and wonder and great exultation, and as we have listened we have heard a voice speaking to us across the spaces, and have suddenly known that for us there are no spaces of separation, but that our Redeemer liveth and has come close beside us. We have in moments of clearing vision caught glimpses of the turrets and towers of the eternal city of our God, and it is a matter of historical fact that those who have entered into the life of personal fellowship with God have had few doubts concerning the reality and satisfactory values of the future life. "Our people die well."

We have valid evidence of the mastery of life by these experts of the first century, in their dealings with the problems of the nascent church of their day. These questions were five and naturally they do not differ much in their essence from the problems of our own age. What these explorers and founders and missionaries and martyrs had to face was: (1) The constant tendency in the primitive church to revert to Judaism.

(2) The ever-present lures of sensuality, the lusts of the flesh, prominent in a gross and corrupt age. (3) The antagonism of paganism as expressed in the civilisation of the Roman Empire. (4) The various excrescences known as heresies or false doctrines. (5) The inevitable cooling-off process that follows every great spiritual advance. Frankly and fearlessly these leaders met and dealt with each of these as they found them.

For all of these persecutions, heresies, backslidings, temptations, and perils of indifference, Paul and John have one remedy. "Walk in the spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." "The law of the Spirit of life . . . hath made me free from the law of sin and death." "If we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." "We walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." It is needless to multiply quotations. The record is replete with expressions which lift the whole level of being to the realm of Spirit and Life, and from this height all things are possible and all questions are solved in the fulness of Him who filleth all and in all by His infinite mercy wherewith He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins, and made us heirs of God.

If we are discouraged by the contrast between our own present attainments and the glorious heights to which Paul and John attained, it may be worth while to remember that they did not reach these everlasting hills by one struggle upward, nor did they dwell there

all the time, and certainly they did not win the everlasting prize by running a single race.

We have but to follow Paul through the development of his own spiritual consciousness, to know something of the changes that came to him between his letters to the Church at Thessalonica and the message to the Philippians. The materialism of a semi-political kingdom and the imagery of Judaism disappear as Paul rises to higher and yet higher understanding of that fellowship with the Father that transcended all things of time and sense. True, as Paul rises in this scale of being the incoherency of his verbal expression increases. His words at times are hard to understand because he is dealing with a realm for which as yet he himself had no language. It is like trying to describe a waterfall on the piano. The result is poor scenery, but at least we may get good music, and what is more important, we are impelled to go and see for ourselves.

Once for all, let it be conceded that Paul's mystical utterances are not theological formulas but rather expressions of the experience of a soul incandescent in the glory of a realised union with God, and we shall avoid vast confusion and misunderstanding. Cool down these meteors from the realm of eternal light that no man can attain unto, and try to compress them into rigid moulds of doctrinal formulas, and as the glory fades we fall into endless and fruitless discussions and bewildered guessings at what he meant. We have missed the key. The words that Paul is speaking to us are Life, not theology.

If Paul needs an interpreter, and he often does, the interpreter also must himself be one who has seen and heard the things beyond that are "not lawful to be uttered." What ages of argument might have been saved by recognising that Paul is to be understood as the prophet of the spiritual consciousness and not as the theologian of the new church. On this superlevel all mysteries fall into orderly relation with all Truth, and as we read with new understanding we too become possessed by a consuming desire to be filled with all the fulness of God.

We are apt to meet fewer difficulties with John than with Paul, because we are dealing with a man of different mould who sees all things with the lucid simplicity of a soul that has attained true values, and in doing so has eliminated conflicting desires and conquered other impulses. There is real danger that this transparency of John may deceive us into thinking that he is in some things superficial, and we may become so engrossed in the fruitful surface of his crystal statements that we fail to penetrate the great depths of his profound experiences of Infinite Reality. John rises so far above the complexity of foothill values that the eternal summits stand solitary and clear above all trivial and distorting considerations of lower levels. John is clear because he sees one thing at a time, and that one thing is the cloudless air of a pure motive and a single eye. John never gets out of focus nor does he ever lose his sense of perspective.

That John did not always dwell amid these azure heights we may easily understand when we remember

that he proposed fire and thunder for the indifferent villagers of Samaria. From the would-be slaughter of those who differed from him in opinion and practice, to the sublime "if we love one another God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us," is a far journey in the growth of the soul.

In reporting the words of Jesus, John used the fascinating figures and symbols that ever have been the favourite language of the mystic trying to convey, in human speech, experiences from another realm of being. We are lifted up to new understandings by the analogies of the Vine and the branches; the Door, the Way, the Truth and the Life. The Bread sent down from heaven, the second birth; the Lamb of God, the grain of wheat that must fall and die that it may not perish alone; the feeding of the lambs and sheep, and other figures betoken the mystic consciousness of the writer of the bold and prophetic declaration that our measure of prophetic expectation as actual sons of God is our approximation to the image of Him whom at last we shall see with clear vision. And in John's own letters we have the simplicity of winnowed grain: the chaff at last is out.

Through all John's final formulas of the spiritual consciousness rings the one clear note. "We know!" and the medium of our knowing is conscious experience. We know because we love the brethren and loving the brethren is a conscious experience. John is speaking not of reasoning processes, nor sense-reactions, but of that final and satisfying knowing that comes through direct contact with Eternal Reality, God the Father

Almighty. Above all weight of witnesses and preponderance of proof is the certainty of the soul that has come to the third kind of knowledge, and finds at last in the Infinite Fatherhood a resting place in its quest for certainty. After long seeking, at last "we know," and, knowing, rest in the assurance that as to what we shall be this much is certain; at least we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is—through crystal reality at last.

If Paul takes us up to a spiritual Pisgah and there shows us dazzling glories of a land so fair that we are consumed by a desire to enter in, John brings to us visions of a land his eye hath seen, of green pastures, of still waters and of inexhaustible richness and beauty, and as we gaze we know that he is describing our home country.

Just because he is so clear-eyed, John has been for countless millions the prophet of the realm of Spirit and Truth. John is the refuge of the soul from the torments and temptations of this present world. John is the compass of the confused mariner seeking to make the harbour of the soul. John is the voice of one who has attained Reality and so found strength and peace. John is the herald of Light and Liberty and the guide to the delectable mountains of the soul's desire, the sure leader of men, ever standing and saying, like the prophet of the wilderness, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Chapter XIV.

THE ATONEMENT

WE come to a mystery and a focus of divine power and love. At the heart of the soul's union with God stands one central fact, uplifted, outstretched, drawing all men by an irresistible attraction. It is the Cross of Christ, on which He died for the sins of men. That human minds have struggled long with this question of a divine atonement, is not strange. Our wonder grows as we behold the hearts of men everywhere bowing down before the cross in rapt adoration and receiving there a something that passeth understanding.

Through the centuries theories and doctrines of atonement have risen and fallen, and given way to other statements that in turn have fallen short. Are we on the wrong track in all this effort to analyse the atonement? Were it not better first to accept it and realise it in conscious experiences and then to follow on to the time when with clearer vision we may behold the secret of God's inscrutable purposes in Christ Jesus?

The life of the spirit in its fulness for every man in some way becomes a reincarnation of the Son of God. "The kingdom of God is within you." Christ was in Paul, by Paul's own testimony, and likewise He is in us to the measure of our capacity to receive Him.

We do show forth the Lord's death till His coming again, just because He is in us and we in Him. Mystical union can find no better term of expression than this. And this union is, in some way, directly related to the cross. If by our renewed and continued sins, we "crucify the Son of God afresh," it is because of this identification of the soul with Christ. He is in us and suffers for our sins. Likewise, if we really attain the life "in Him," we may be crucified with Christ, and may also reign with Him.

Whatever else we may say or come to know of the cross, this much stands clearly revealed. We see in any object or person only what our previous experiences or inner ideals enable us to see. Destroy from our ideas everything that comes into our thinking and experiences by way of Calvary, and we have but little concept left with which to know and understand God. Calvary with its disgrace, its torture, its forgiveness of enemies, its compassion for the sinning, its loving consideration for the helpless, its final triumph over sin and opposition and hindrance, its giving of all in wholly selfless, vicarious sacrifice—all that this means has wholly changed our concept of God and humanity. Strike all this out and what have we left? Much, to be sure, but eliminate the atoning death of Christ and we have lost forever the most vital and central thing in all our thought of God. Forget Calvary and for our hope of pardon and immortality we go back to bloody beasts and swinging censers and droning priests.

Greatest of all exponents of this way of the cross is Paul. Paul was primarily a mystic and lived, to the

utmost fulness, the life of the Spirit. His communion with God was so close and constant that he saw the unseeable and heard the untellable, and it is when he tries to describe these experiences that he becomes at times not quite logical. His was an exceedingly deep and rich life of the spirit. The overflow of his own inner life exceeded all formulas and ran beyond all bounds of cold and exact statement. He tries to tell us how it looked to him when he was filled with the Spirit. His letters to the churches were not theological treatises nor prophetic utterances, but were the fruits of his own inner life hid with Christ in God. He knew, and knew tremendously, what he was saying, and any soul that has entered into the holy of holies and tasted the good word of life in the fulness of the Spirit has no difficulty in understanding what Paul was talking about. From Peter on down we have ever made the mistake of trying to measure by cold logic the splendid overflow of life that ran beyond all barriers of form and word. We look for theological husks, and miss the living fruit.

Through the whole letter to the Church at Rome, Paul is trying to indicate "something supreme, some enormous uplift to eternal levels" which he himself achieved, and in and by which he lives. This "is the soul's fundamental religious experience, its conscious attainment of God."

Viewed this way, we begin to understand something of the utter inadequacy of all buying-off theories of the atonement. For him Calvary was a road through to God. He had passed that way himself and knew the

glories of the further goal. Calvary coloured all his consciousness and saturated all his thinking. Prayer, human fellowship, and sacrificial service, with Paul all had meaning and mission as related to the atonement of Jesus. And Jesus was not "reconciling an angry God to sinful men," but God "was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" and He had made Paul and his successors ministers of the word of reconciliation. Jesus was not paying a debt that man owed to God; He was opening up a road through to God by which repentant men might find Him and come to know Him whom to know aright is life eternal.

This cross of Jesus becomes the door into the mystical spiritual consciousness of the soul. If we are to "redeem consciousness from its lower level," it must be by means of some divine and cataclysmic upheaval that changes radically our whole way of thinking and puts us in entirely new relation to God. As an external act, performed on behalf of passive and non-participating men, Calvary can have for the thoughtful but little meaning. As a means of bringing men home to God and making possible and actual the higher fellowship of the soul with God, the death of Christ was the transcendent moment of all history, the consummation of God's purpose to redeem mankind, the attainment of living fellowship with men.

Until Jesus cried, "It is finished!" it was not clear just what human life could be, nor how far it might reach upward. It was an uncertain experiment, till Jesus filled up the ragged outline, and fulfilled the shortcomings of life, and opened the way through to

complete union with the Father. Thus Christ bridged the gap between men and God, scaled a new summit in the name of humanity, and opened up forever a new horizon beyond the old limits of the before-Christ human experience. Before that men never really believed in life. After Calvary all life is potentially divine.

We may have stumbled over the idea of the atonement because we have looked at one side of it, the atonement as something done on the cross *for* us. More important still is the fact that the atonement is something done *in* us and that continues to work in and through us. The realisation of this inner atonement constituted that reconciliation of us unto Himself that God was effecting through Christ. A continuous experience of that inner atonement constitutes the effective means of that vital union with the Father which *is* the end of all spirit life. Through Christ and His cross we reach the final objective of all Christian living; for no man unaided, be he Plato or Socrates or modern materialist, has yet reached the realm of spiritual fellowship with God.

Having come thus far, man himself becomes an atoner and takes his place "to fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ." To complete the uncompleted atonement a man must enter into the same relation to God that Jesus maintained, and take up his cross and follow Christ. Thus, and thus only, may we become saviours of other men, and such, and no less, is our high calling in Christ Jesus. It is for us to open the way for other souls that they too may

find Him. In this way noble personalities become something greater than themselves, higher than their own level, better than their best. There is a touch of the divine in a life that has come to a union with God that uplifts and transfigures and multiplies personality to powers impossible in any other way. That there should be occasional and sometimes sudden bursts of glory and radiance is not strange. If somehow we might dissolve that dulness of soul that dims the vision and thickens the utterance, we might more often meet on the mountains of transfiguration and enter the indescribable glory that is hid with Christ in God.

Here we approach the highest values that human life can give us. This transcendent life of the spirit finds expressions through various types of personality. Some are called to be apostles, dynamic manifestations of the spirit working through men of action. Through such are empires founded and the cross uplifted in the far fields and darkened regions of the earth. Some are called to be prophets, men of far and clear vision, enlarging the horizons for all mankind. Others are teachers, patiently plodding through the routine of instruction in the things of the eternal kingdom of God, and seeking to discover and fan to flame the spark in every personality. And others become martyrs, men of complete sacrifice and utmost personal surrender of all for the cause.

If there had been no atoning act on Calvary then there could be no redemptive process in the life of the believer, and all life of the spirit would be an

isolated quest for an unknown treasure in an uncharted country. If there be, through Christ, no union of the spirit of man with the spirit of God, then the death of Christ was a segregated and futile sacrifice without relation to Infinite Love or human redemption.

Chapter XV

PRAYER

FOR the materialist prayer is an effort to communicate with Mars. The spectacle of a great scientist trying to devise some super-delicate electric apparatus by which departed spirits might communicate with living men, suggests both the inferred debility of the spirits and the absurdity of purely scientific means to fathom the realms of spiritual things.

Twice-born men are not much troubled about definitions of prayer, nor apparatus through which the dead may speak. When a heart has tasted the good word of life and knows that its Redeemer liveth, there is no great concern about academic formulas of faith. Jesus Himself left us no formal definition of prayer, but He did give us the supreme example, and with prayer, example and practice outweigh definition and analysis. The cry of a hungry-hearted, broken-spirited humanity is not for a philosophy of prayer, it is, "teach us how to pray."

Prayer is a man's communication with God. It may be answer, it may be petition, it may be contemplation, adoration, confession, or exaltation, but whatever it is, it is inter-communion between God and the human soul.

Prayer that is of any real value involves the whole

being of man. Any genuine prayer involves all that personality includes. Certainly this is not true of all so-called prayer. Half-hearted praying, purely emotional praying, coldly intellectual praying, dogged persistence in prayer for the sake of the persistence, physical praying as implied in bodily postures and gestures, certainly none of these by itself is effective prayer. The whole self is related to the spiritual kingdom, and the whole self must take part in worship as in service. Prayer never touches reality until it becomes an honest expression of the deepest desire of a man's being. So long as we pray mostly about something else than what we really want, we need not wonder why God does not take us more seriously.

Perhaps the most common defect in our praying is the tendency to move in a narrow circle of recurring phrases and petitions. Beads may be counted by the hour while thoughts wander far, and the use of a prayer book in public is no guarantee against mental preoccupation with things in no way related to prayer. One may well wonder what the congregation is thinking of during the "long prayer" of the minister, and since such exercises are often marked by stereotyped phraseology it may be that the hearers are frequently willing to turn the matter over to him who leads the devotional act, while they meditate on other matters.

Prayer that comes from the depths and puts the whole man to praying is not a frequent experience with any of us. Nor does concentration imply either frenzy of utterance or retirement from the world. It does involve the complete concentration of attention

of the spirit that dwells at the center of one's being. Attaining that, we have all else. And the exercise of this concentrated attention is not a thing to be taken up on a moment's notice and dropped when there is something else to do. Prayer that is the whole man praying becomes the highest activity of the soul.

Even the body has something to do with complete prayer. Paul had something to say about the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit within us and Jesus gave attention to a sound physical basis for spirituality. It is a great thing to talk a little with God while going about daily tasks, but that is only a partial prayer at best. There are occasional times when prayer rises to such a dominance of personality that preoccupation with ordinary tasks for the moment is out of the question. That there is virtue in a regular accustomed time and place of prayer, we know by the testimony of multitudes of saints in all ages, and may know by our own experience if we will make the trial. This place of devotion has often been a "closet" apart and sometimes bare of all ornament. There may be æsthetic uplift in groined arches and vaulted aisles, but for the complete communion of the soul with God external distractions are a hindrance rather than a help. Barren have been the cells of monks and recluses and for the normal, everyday man dealing with the unseen, details of surroundings are secondary, be they simple or ornate. The main thing is to have somewhere a place of prayer, an attic or a basement will do, any place in which to find the God who reveals Himself within us.

Certainly the will has something to do with the initial act in prayer. Later may come the moment when the will is merged in contemplation and conscious effort gives way to absorption in the thought of God, but this kind *begins* with consciously fixed attention. Every prayer at its beginning has need of some directed attention, else it may become mere day-dreaming. Conscious attention has much to do in bringing within the focus of vision the Object of our contemplation. "We must form some conception of the supernal intercourse we are going to attempt, and of the parties to it," directs the ancient expert, though if our prayer be real, that concept will soon be transcended. This forming of a conception of what we are about is, of course, a mental process and the mind has its part to play in all prayer that is anything more than a verbal formula. Preconceived ideals and notions do influence our petitioning and the more worthy our thoughts of God the more adequate will be our fellowship of intercession. Ignorance and crudity of concept are no conditions of success in prayer. "When thou goest about to pray, first make and frame between thee and God a full purpose and intention and then begin and do as well as thou canst," directs Walter Hilton. Santa Teresa insists that we should begin our prayers by thinking what we are about to do.

There are a few people who still insist that in prayer, intelligence has small place. Emotional paroxysm is taken as the measure of devotion. But emotion unrelated to intelligence runs away with prayer as with all else, even as intellect without feeling turns

the heart to ice. Prayer without feeling may bring light, but it is light without heat and when fervour freezes the heart is apt to grow cold and dumb. Between the extremes of a cold intellectualism and a fervent emotionalism, the petition of the earnest heart reveals a something warm and genuine that the intellectual icicles lack.

"God may be loved but not thought," chanted a medieval mystic with clear insight. We may think things about God to great profit, but until something happens to our thinking to give it warmth, it is not apt to move us much. We may think and think, but until thought is touched by feeling little will happen. Thought without the stirring within "ever remains exterior to its object." A sense of oneness with God comes to us usually when we put all there is of us to the business of communion with God. We do know that if a mode of prayer is once established, something then does happen; consciousness somehow does lift to a new level; the field of perception is shifted, new contacts are made, God speaks. How is this to be done? "By a synthesis of love and will."

Unfortunately our mental and emotional states are not constant factors of consciousness. We are keen to-day, slow-witted to-morrow; now our hearts are beating high with hope, later we become depressed and morbid. If our life of prayer is to depend on mental acuteness or emotional fervour, we are in a bad way. Fortunately there is no declaration anywhere that the kingdom of heaven is to be taken by ecstatic feelings, or by logical formulas. If we are

to enter the gates of the city of contemplation, it will be by fixing the conscious attention on God Himself and holding it steadily there until the portals swing open and the currents of communion bear us within the holy walls.

Here again we find help in universal experience. Instead of trying to invent good things about God to say and think in our moments of devotion, it is often well to drop all secondary matters and concentrate the whole attention on God and on Him alone. "The most theological of thoughts becomes inadequate to take the place of the sense of fellowship with the Infinite; the most exalted of emotions is only a fair-weather breeze. Let the ship of the soul take advantage of it by all means, but not exclusively rely upon it. She must be prepared to beat to windward if she is to reach her goal."

Here we encounter the Waterloo of most praying. Why do our thoughts wander in prayer? And how attain concentration? It is easier to explain the first question than answer the second. There is the up-crowding of the suppressed sub-conscious hosts and relics within us; there is the natural low level of normal consciousness; there is the pull of the flesh, the insistent intrusion of other and vital considerations, the clamour of the senses, the call of social obligations. It would be idle to expect suddenly to shift the whole level of consciousness to the spirit plane. That is one of the greatest, the most difficult and worth-while tasks of life. Thus begins the emancipation of the soul.

In many cases sheer lack of practice explains difficulties of attention. But there is a remedy at hand, for what we consciously do in moments of attention that eventually we come to do unconsciously. At first we find our minds in no mood for it; but hold steadily to it and the mood in time will come and the Spirit will speak to us when we listen attentively. What most of us need is a "daily dozen" of spiritual exercises to set up the soul and tune us in on what God is saying. Merely to stretch the soul by trying to think of the greatness, the goodness, the infinite wisdom and love and power of God does soon turn the attention upward and we find ourselves over the bar of inattention almost before we know it, and can drop these things about God and meet Him there. Then often follows a contemplation which resembles a sort of listening-in on the universe with a sense of wonder and adoration. This may pass on into a surrender of self to the Infinite Spirit of Love with its accompanying realisation of fellowship with God. Beyond this we are out of words. Paul truly said that there is no way to describe what may be reserved for those who love Him.

There is a difference between prayer as communion and prayer as intercession, but much of our intercession on behalf of other persons fails of result because all intercession to become effective must begin with communion. And intercession, when it loses sight of self entirely, must rise to the heights of fellowship in the suffering and atonement of Him who died for our redemption. Thus do we fill up that which is

behind of the sufferings of Christ, each in his own place entering into the ministry of intercession and becoming a mediator between God and man.

How we have stumbled over the word of Jesus, "Whatsoever ye ask in my name, ye shall receive." Yet once we find the key the answer is not difficult. "Name" stands for personality, a descriptive term indicating the being named. The name of Jesus, Son of God, indicates His character, position, and relation with the Father. "I and the Father are one." To ask in the name of Jesus is to ask in His place and relation with God as an obedient and loving Son. Only in the higher realms of communion and spiritual fellowship may the soul be said to ask in the name of Jesus. When the earth pull is left below, and mind and heart and will are merged in adoration and love, there comes a moment when the soul reaches hearty accord with the will of the Father and it becomes true, as it was of Jesus, that God and the soul are at one purpose. Here, and here only, we find ourselves actually praying in the name (and place) of Jesus. And without a shadow of doubt, whatsoever we ask here, shall be granted. But we find an often overlooked step in the process. Praying thus in this state of oneness with God, as did Jesus, we find that there are certain things that we cannot ask at all. Even though the mind may suggest them, the heart is dumb and the tongue silent. We do not even wish to ask the thing that we cannot ask when in oneness with God. Why should we desire anything at all not included in the "all things" of divine love and mercy? There

are levels of spiritual consciousness in which for the moment the will of him who prays seems lost as a separate individuality. For those who know this experience, even though they rarely attain it, there are few puzzling problems regarding prayer.

We come to the question of petition. The materialist scoffs at the whole matter of asking in prayer. Spiritual beggary at the throne of grace may become as disreputable as any other form of vagrancy. Any prayer that has as its main object something that we want for our own pleasure or profit will inevitably fall short of the prayer of Jesus as practised and taught to His followers. Nevertheless, Jesus did teach us to ask for daily bread and to regard all good and perfect gifts, material as well as others, as coming down from the God and Father of us all. What then is the place of petition in prayer?

First, prayer that is petition and petition only cannot rise to the upper levels of complete communion with God. This constant asking for something has a distinct downward pull on the life of the spirit. We do receive help, the refreshing showers fall on the just and unjust so far as each has capacity to receive. And here is the difficulty; we receive only in proportion to our capacity, and constant beggary shrinks our capacity. Intercession enlarges our scope, but we ask and receive not because we have nowhere to contain the besought blessing.

There is nothing that increases spiritual capacity and depth of understanding like direct and disinterested communion with God. And in the realisation

of this fellowship with God for its own sake, we find time enough to ask, "in His name," for such things as may be consistent with His infinite love and goodness toward us. Any other asking is like standing outside the gate and shouting over the wall for such favours as we think we want.

There is a time element in prayer that is apt to receive scant attention in a busy life. It takes time to be holy and it takes time to pray. The experts in physical health are asking us to give them fifteen minutes of our time every day, and they promise us in return good health and long life. In the main they are within reason and result in their claims. Do we give fifteen minutes of our time daily to God? What about the toning-up exercises of the spirit? And how do we employ the few minutes that we do give Him? The life of the spirit is subject to system as truly as that of the mind and body. A jerky, irregular, interrupted practice of prayer may be and is better, a little better, than none at all, but it certainly produces spiritual anemia and moral instability. "A little lifting up of the heart the first thing," recommended Brother Lawrence. There can be no greater steadying power in a life than a regular, systematic practice of daily prayer. Daniel of old, opening his windows toward Jerusalem at regular intervals daily, regardless of what any one else thought or said or did about it, may have been thought a little fanatical, but the Daniels of history have proven very good men to tie to in emergencies, and very steadfast people to live with all the while.

Prayer is essentially the highest activity and experience of the spiritual nature of man. But before prayer can reach the highest levels it must begin on the plane of everyday consciousness and by means of ordinary mental effort. No soul living in a neglected or abused body can attain the higher forms of prayer. No soul leaving out of account human intelligence can pray effectively. Without the full effort of the will no prayer at all is possible. And when we try to repress the heart cry, the inner throb of longing, we shall but string together verbal formulas devoid of living power. We may repeat only wise words, or we may cultivate only rapture, or we may pray as stern discipline, and in any or all of these forms fail to find the glory and power of it. Prayer is the whole being merging in the Spirit of God. And realising this fellowship with the Father, we enter the inner circle of those who are called no longer servants, but friends of God.

Chapter XVI

THE SPIRITUAL NOTE IN EDUCATION

By the term "education" different people sometimes mean different things, but most of us would include in any serious definition of the word the discovery and training of the deepest and broadest development-possibilities in an individual personality. Toward this end the imparting of a "body of knowledge" has certain pragmatic values. Development of self-expression is a valid factor in the total result. The awakening and stimulation of the inner spirit to self-direction and initiative effort, is one of the worthy ends of education. Preparation of the individual for useful co-operative living with other men is not the least of educational objectives. Just at present any kind of education is the charmed word, and religious education is sometimes recommended as a substitute for almost everything else in the Christian propaganda.

Now if education is to establish for a human being healthy contacts with the universe, then any complete scheme must include the leading of the spirit up to possible and optional relations with the Living God. We may drive a boy to his books, or shop, or laboratory, but we cannot drive a soul to God. Life itself often does that but the man has always the great refusal in his power. When we stand at last face

to face with the final First Cause in every normal spirit, we are on holy ground, and the answer to the burning bush is ours to make if we will.

Amid the various forms of the general complaint that something is wrong with our educational system, we come to the widespread conviction of religious people that we are training in children everything but the spiritual nature. When super-intelligence becomes super-criminal, we have failed at the most vital point. We have left out the "fourth R" from our curricula. We have taught everything but Righteousness, and in so doing have vitiated the social value of the whole system, and produced a fatal weakness in the foundations of our educational temple. It is the old propensity of the materialist to deal with men as if they were highly intelligent animals, ignoring the existence of a spiritual nature not to be fed on facts and things. And so doing, we are sending out into life moral and spiritual cripples, the victims of our blunders.

If education has to do with the developing of personality and orientation in the universe of the whole man, we neglect at infinite peril those natural inner cravings after Reality that mark the growing adolescent child. Repressed or neglected, these forces may die away, or they may break out in extravagances and in extreme cases may overleap all bounds and destroy sanity. Disciplined and directed, these yearnings for the satisfaction beyond all intellectual knowing may discover the Great Secret of all existence and release energies of infinite value.

Happy is the child whose early years are spent among persons of clear spiritual vision and strong sense of spiritual values. Doctrinal discussions and theological formulas have nothing to do with that indefinable spirit of a Christian home that contributes a permanent spiritual understanding to the children who learn to lisp their first petitions to God, to bow the head in thanksgiving before meals, and to gather about a family altar for daily recognition of the Giver of all good gifts. Stronger still is the silent and unmarked influence of godly and harmonious living together under the family roof, and the unfailing love of faithful parents, who, unknowing to themselves and their children, come to stand in the place of God for the growing child. To have passed through childhood in such a home is to face life with a fair moral start.

Most of us are the product of three factors: what we bring to life at the start, what life does to us, and what we do to life, and we need not trouble much about the relative value of the first two factors. It is clear that first-class native talents if badly educated will become perverted, or if neglected will deteriorate to second or third levels, while relatively inferior natural ability, well trained and steadily used, may rise to high levels, and at times approximate something like genius in wholly unexpected levels of attainment.

This principle applies with great force to the life of the spirit. Not many mighty are called to experiences of direct communion with Divine Reality, but humble souls by steady practice of daily fellowship with God come to a wondrous development of spiritual

consciousness and to a worthy usefulness as spiritual leaders. Once awakened and active, the spirit that is in man is quick to take advantage of every new pathway that leads toward God, and with every effort to realise and express the new-found treasure, better facilities of communion and means of expression appear. There is no foretelling the spiritual possibilities of any child or youth, but if the right appeal is made on the level of the unfolding understanding, the spiritual nature will begin to grow. To discover and develop the spiritual appetites of the children among us is high privilege and noble service. To neglect this highest education is to commit irremediable wrong against the individual and the society of which he is a part.

The aim of religious education is of course not catechism reciting, nor glib text-repeating of proofs for doctrinal formulas. Protestantism at least has come thus far. But how much further have we come? The thirty distracting minutes per week of the how-to-keep-order type of Sunday school "instruction" is a pretty mechanical method. And religious education, even where conducted by technically trained teachers, has still some distance to go before we make effective in the unfolding soul a solid hold on Reality. Too often we are teaching the growing child some things about God that fall short of bringing him to an experience of personal relations with God. Until a spirit attains a sense of personal knowing of God as All and in all we cannot look for that stability and poise of soul that comes from building on the eternal

foundations. This does not imply a standardised type of emotional experience, nor uniform doctrinal "soundness," but it does mean an inner consciousness of personal relation with God and a major life-motive described by the term, love to God and men.

Here we often fail. If by conventional methods we secure some sort of "decision" and get the child into the church, we say unto ourselves, "Well done, good and faithful servant," and leave the spiritual infant to learn to walk and talk in his own way. If the child survives, well and good. If he perishes, probably he was not alive anyway. We teach morality, after a fashion; one must be able to respond to social obligations and personal duties. But the life of the spirit, intricate and perplexing as it ever is to the novice, we leave to chance, largely because we ourselves but imperfectly know how best we may respond to God. We teach the minds of our pupils and store them with facts concerning the value of ancient coins (with tables), and the journeys of Paul (with maps) far more effectively than we give these young folks a real appreciation of the spiritual values of the ancient stories, or help them to catch the vision splendid that led Paul throughout one of the most heroic careers of all time. Yet the facts, without the vision and the voice, are dead. The final achievement of existence is the development of spiritual consciousness, but we are spending our educational energies in developing mental and physical effectiveness as if spiritual culture were a chance elective in life's curriculum. And when we do deal with the life of the

spirit, we have a feeling that we would like to turn down the lights and have as few present as possible.

How shallow is the equipment that we hand on to our children, the results too well attest. An assortment of religious phrases, of pious images, of prescribed hopes and conventional emotions, make up the equipment of the average youth of twenty-one years, turned loose to make his way through life and to find, as best he may, his relations with God. Small wonder that persons with such a beginning, consciously or unconsciously, divorce religion from reality, and, knowing no more excellent way, maintain a sort of Sunday-go-to-meeting (when convenient) relation with religion, to which they pay but little heed until another Sunday (weather permitting) brings another brief sojourn in this realm of shadowy hopes and fears. Meanwhile there abides the hungry heart with the silent consciousness that somehow, somewhere, there must be a better way.

We are confronted by the adolescent life about us, not by a theory of ethics. What are we to do for the more adequate development of this life?

We will have to begin where God begins, in the human family. It is an all but fatal tragedy that any child should reach maturity without learning the language of simple prayer, and without having received directly from parents and indirectly from the home life the rudiments of things divine. The beginnings of love, reverence, admiration, and wonder are made in childhood, if they are to ripen to spiritual consciousness in any full sense of the term. Principles, doc-

trines, and definitions can wait till later. Prayer must ever come before doctrine, and loving kindness before ethics, if we are to lay securely the foundations. "Why?" and "How?" come later on. "This is the way," is the key to childhood's unfolding.

With school years comes need for extending our system. The "whys" will come soon enough and need not be anticipated. Duty-directions and conduct-ideals and hero-motives come into play as character builders and religion teachers. Here we begin to go beyond mere doctrines or morals. Only in the light of spiritual truth can we fathom and plumb the deepest values of life. We cannot attain any adequate historical perspective or social horizon without taking into account spiritual values in human experience. Much less can we hope to relate a growing soul to the universe without teaching something of the possibility of a spiritual consciousness.

Too often we are teaching religion itself as if it were a matter of listed historical statements and catalogued moral obligations. Say the catechism, repeat the commandments, name the books of the Bible in order, and all will be well. Meanwhile, few children in our Sunday schools or churches have any direct instruction regarding the transcendent fact that the greatest words and works of the most eminent spiritual leaders of all time have to do with something other than commandments and creed and doctrine, and reach out into a new and richer kind of experience, declared to be attainable, in some form and degree, by every man. The least that we can do is to describe, as best

we may, this new kind of experience and encourage our pupils to make their own effort to enter therein. If the proper study of mankind is man, then we certainly fail if we leave out of account the highest nature and the most important extension of human experience of which we have any knowledge. Certainly we may teach something of the psychology of human experience and the motives and experiences of the best examples of a vigorous but normal spiritual life.

How readily the heart of youth responds to such teaching only those of experience in such work can know. There is in every normal youthful heart, a sense of incompleteness and not-yet-attained unity of life. We have no need to prove to youth the existence of a spiritual capacity for relations with the Unseen. What he wants to know is how to realise such unity. He may not say so openly, but at heart he is looking for a way through the maze of conflicting reactions, confusing experiences, and tangled phenomena to that Ultimate Reality of whom the soul is dimly conscious, and whom, having not seen, nevertheless he has come dimly to feel under the superscription of an unknown Reality at the heart of all things.

To find some key to these inner and higher instincts of the soul certainly should be an object of religious education. To discover such a rationale of the spirit is to solve the major problem of relating one's self to the universe, and may end much of the confusion of the adolescent mind. Through the study of universal human experience much of this matter could be presented, in the same way that we approach human

experience in any of its forms of expression or spheres of manifestation. We cannot enter the region of direct spiritual perceptions by this route but we can clear away much of the rubbish and ignorance, and give the free spirit a clear course through to its Goal. Great are the losses in development when adolescent religious emotion and hunger are allowed to focus upon ritualistic performance or emotional extravaganza. Led aright, these latent soul-energies would carry the spirit through to God, and establish contacts that would permanently unify and energise the whole life.

Such leading upward of the spirit does not imply neglect of other interests nor subversion of other normal desires. We are saved, not as disembodied spirits, but as living souls. Youth responds to a very multiplex system of ambitions and aspirations and without the keynote the harmony of life is lost. Once this greatest First thing is in place, all other values of loyalty, love, truth, kindness, and service fall into place, and life becomes a rounded whole.

The great essentials of religious consciousness are two, prayer and service. All that we mean by fellowship, communion, contemplation, personal contacts with God, is comprehended by the term prayer. In dealing with youth, at least we can lift the word out of its degraded content of beggary and bombardment, and bring to its meaning something of the richness and glory of the ideal of a satisfactory personal relation with God who doeth all things well. In deeper meanings, prayer comprises all that is supernatural

and super-rational in life, and its main essentials may be sympathetically taught to any intelligent person. Out beyond the level of the intellectually teachable extend the glorious realities of actual practice of the presence of God, and the soul-stretching exercises of spiritual consciousness, where we can only hope to awaken in the growing spirit a desire to taste and see for one's self that the Lord is good. Beyond this, it is every one forward and upward in his own way, as the Spirit may direct.

All that this life of union with God may mean for the world must find expression through some form of helpful social contact and unselfish service. Rightly understood and lovingly practised, thus is the life of the spirit communicated to men, and we may become living links between God and a needy world. Through this life of the spirit are our creative faculties energised, our motives purified, and our ideals directly related to human needs. To love God with all the being and one's neighbour as one's self, verily this is all of the Gospel, beyond which nothing more comes within the reach of the soul's comprehension.

Chapter XVII

THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT AND EVANGELISM

SOME writers on mysticism miss the essential missionary nature of Christian faith. Yet it is the general experience of spiritually-minded men that every new gain in spiritual consciousness brings its own extension-impulse. The new life must find expression and tell what God has done for the soul. This need for communication is wholly independent of the self-preservation propaganda activities of churches.

There exists an age-long variance between the prophet and the priest, between the conserver of institutions and the Voice of the free Spirit, but the purest type of evangelism flows from the deepest and most absorbing experiences of men whose motives are above all considerations of personal advantage or ecclesiastical expediency.

There is close historical relation between the personal experiences of fellowship with God and the most fervent and effective types of evangelism. Jonah awakened the Ninevites to repentance, but not until after he had heard the Voice of the Lord in unmistakable accents. The Children of Israel were led out of Egypt by a man who talked with God. The hymns of the Hebrews were written by men who brought to

their songs not creeds nor theology, but the illusive and stimulating language of conscious communion with God. There is more of comfort and refreshment in "Lord thou has been our dwelling place in all generations" than in volumes of dialectic discussion of the permanency of divine providence. Nehemiah led a very successful revival, but not till he had talked personally with God and realised some vivid experiences of His presence.

The Christian Fathers, engaged in controversy as they were, nevertheless were effective evangelists in proportion as they themselves caught the Divine Vision. Augustine's journey to Britain followed the vision and voice. George Fox, John Livingstone, William Booth, D. L. Moody, and William Carey laboured as seeing Him who is invisible, and the invisible element in their lives gave power to their evangel.

There is an organisational element in all effective evangelism. Left to themselves individual men rarely maintain a continuous work of propaganda. Sporadic individual effort rarely carries the torch of truth any great distance. The flame dims, the energy decreases, the vision pales, and the crusade runs down and stops. Hence the stability and growth of organised Christianity with its permanent evangelistic dynamic. The church is a necessity for the carrying on of the cause. The leaders of the spiritual life have always felt the need of concreting in some organised form the results of their vision. Some have enriched existing organisations, and some have founded new orders, but the

end is ever the same. The deeper life of the spirit demands some incarnation in human experience and some propaganda medium through lives banded together for a common purpose.

There are always personal experiences, independent of all evangelistic intention, and there are translations of these experiences into understandable language, as far as such a thing can be done, that we may invite others to come and see. There are likewise institutional revival campaigns dated by the calendar, regulated by the clock, and proclaimed by the newspapers, and such means may achieve worthy results. The church ought to possess at all times a certain reserve of spiritual life to give out to others, and should ever be ready with her witness to the light that is within her. Certainly we should not commit the ancient error of "waiting till we be free to it" before we invite human beings to come and know for themselves. Wherever there may be found a needy soul, there is a good time for an evangelistic meeting between the soul and God.

All this is well, but in practice we have to admit the expenditure of an enormous output of evangelistic energy, often with a microscopic result. Few of us realise how stereotyped are the methods and phrases of much of this activity. Differ as forms may among various denominations, they all agree in this, that sooner or later the forms become associated with the results, and we are apt to insist stoutly on our own particular way of doing it as the one true way let down from Heaven among men. If a "mission," or

a three weeks' preaching with an "altar call" every night, or sent-and-paid-for professional evangelists, or a decision day, or a catechism class, do not produce results, then the responsibility rests upon the unwon. We have delivered our souls, their blood be upon their own heads.

How then shall we explain the barrenness of so much hard-driven propaganda? For this unfruitfulness is one factor in the abandonment of direct evangelism in favour of a prescribed process of religious education. Slow are the net gains of the larger denominations, and many are the individual churches that run along for years with no perceptible change in numbers. No one takes seriously the arithmetical plea that the membership be doubled every year by the every-one-get-another method, for not every convert will be a propagandist and not all men will become religious, but considering the investment of money in church property, in music and salaries, and the millions of hours of time spent by the numbers who do, more or less, attend church services, the net result, as measured by converts, is astonishingly small. No one claims that this is the total result of the visible church, but somehow there should be a better way.

Various factors contribute to the small result. Poor methods and dulness of presentation sometimes sap the vitality of the evangelistic movement. Indifference on the part of the preacher explains some of the trouble. When a pastor can preach the year around without making an appeal, raising a question, or winning a convert, there would seem to be something wrong with

his motives or method. There is always the need of taking to the highways and byways and compelling them to come in. Some there are who win no more converts because winning converts is the hardest of work and they are not willing to pay the price. On whose head, then, shall their blood be?

Yes, there are many reasons why, but the ultimate problem of small results is not one of details nor methods. There is a deeper defect. We are trying to produce by intellectual or emotional forces, effects in the realm of spiritual consciousness. We do sometimes succeed, for personality is enough of a unit that if reached on any level a man may be affected throughout his being. Constitutional treatment may reach the remoter faculties. It is not a question of methods; some of the greatest revivals have appeared without visible preparation, and have been carried on with very informal methods. It is the something uncharted and unorganised and unseen that characterises the genuine work of the Spirit in human hearts. And this unsurveyed something we are often trying to produce by methods of argument and emotional upheaval. We preach athletically and tell pathetic stories and argue about the needs of moral living while men nod in their seats; they know that as well as we. Sometimes we argue about the existence of values in a realm beyond the experience of our listeners and wonder that they go away unchanged. We proclaim the mysteries of the science of mining to men whose interests are all on the surface.

Evangelism in its really effective ranges is a some-

thing beyond sense perceptions or intellectual convictions. The power of every great revival lies in its tapping of the third realm of consciousness, and its direct dealing with the attainment of personal fellowship with God. On this level are released those forces that break out spontaneously in moral miracles and transformed lives, at times changed almost out of resemblance to their unregenerated originals. When this happens there are always other people looking on and wondering how it came about, and whether anything awaits themselves in the same realm of spiritual life. The new-born spirit often falls back on traditional formulas to express his new experience, but the contagion of it is not in the formulas, but in the evident something that has happened to the man. Lectures on mineralogy may not interest the individual, but when some one gets up and shows the golden nuggets he has found, there are immediately others who want to go and dig for themselves.

Thus it comes that in all ages the most effective evangelistic weapon has been, not argument nor emotional excitement, but plain testimonies of those who have attained something that stirs forgotten echoes in the hearts of other men. Verily, religion is something to be "caught from those who have it." "Come and see" has always won more men than "repent or perish," granted that the men in question are not too far from normal. John uses no empty figures of speech when he says that one of the three effective weapons of overcoming was the word of their testimony. And most powerful is the testimony of that

something unseen and unnamable that often unconsciously accompanies the soul that has found God.

Reduced to its last terms, effective evangelism is a matter of establishing contact with the Spirit of the Living God. If we have entered in for ourselves, we will have something to offer that men will want. If we prosecute our evangelism from a sense of duty, or to increase our church membership, or to emphasise our own complacent security, then we will continue to wonder at the small results. We must receive before we can give and having received we *must* give or lose it. Nothing grows stale sooner than a spiritual experience shut in upon itself and isolated from all human contacts.

Once we attain this level of the spirit life, all sorts of well-worn images of speech and symbols of experience come to new meaning. No man can exactly say what has happened between his soul and God. Symbols leave to every man his own interpretation, and each man may fit the figure to his own needs. Such suggestive forms of speech are better than exact and scientific formulas. It is required only that we recognise them as speech forms and not as mechanical descriptions. The whole list of "religious articles"—demons, crucifixes and rosaries, pictures, altars, and incense—may come to a certain significance for the soul that has first found reality in direct communion with God. As substitutes for such Reality, they become pernicious stones of stumblings. Likewise the phraseology of the evangelists, the altar, the Lamb, the blood, Canaan, Pisgah, Jabbok, and the technical

meanings imposed on such words as conviction, repentance, restitution, confession, and witness, all may have value, but as substitutes for fresh and living experiences of God they become as hidden snags to wreck the soul. For most men's approach to God will continue to be by familiar speech figures, enriched by the religious ideology of the time. The formal service of public worship has its high usefulness in helping to free us from the lower levels of consciousness and turning the attention steadily and definitely toward the Source from which cometh our Light and Help.

It is worth while to remember this: that, at every time and in every place, there are always some people who are in such a state of mind that they will respond to an evangelistic presentation of the truth, granted that it come within the range of their consciousness. The practical problem is to find these people and adapt the message to their condition.

We come at last to this: that the effectiveness of our evangelism will vary in relation and proportion to the completeness of the evangelist's own realised fellowship with God on the higher level of spiritual consciousness, and the effectiveness of his presentation of this in understandable terms. No matter how blunderingly may be our speech, if we have something unique and unspeakably precious to give to men, they will listen while we honestly try to tell them about it. At best we can never quite tell them what it is that we see and know, but in trying to do so we can at least make them hungry to find the same good things for themselves, and we shall win some.

Chapter XVIII

THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

THE Gospel is the power of God unto salvation for every man, also for all men, which suggests a broader working programme. But have we two gospels—one for the seeking soul and one for the social whole? And what of the soul whose consuming quest is for living fellowship with God; for whom the chief end of existence is to know God and enjoy him forever? How can a man wholly occupied with the quest after Reality also be an active and contributing member of a complex and exacting social organisation, which demands the service and sacrifice of its members and leaders if it is not to perish beneath the weight of its own selfishness and greed? This is no merely academic question; the destiny of mankind is involved. Who is to redeem human society on the earth?

Three major efforts have been made to solve the problems of living together in this present world. The men of force have had full opportunity to show what they can do and they have done it. Once upon a time the descending floods wiped out the past and humanity began again. With the climax of militarism are we facing the end of another cycle of human life on the earth? Will there arise a third and will it be

any better than its predecessors? Is another glacial winter of civilisation to remove a social order that has failed to solve the problems of human social relations? At least, we now know the meaning of brute force and whither it is leading us. Modern science and invention have made war the suicide of civilisation.

The materialistic scientist has an answer for our problem, though his plea is not always clearly expressed nor are its final results yet definitely known? So rapid has been the progress of invention that we are still dazzled by the flash of headlights and a-quiver with the vibrations of electric energies. That this same spirit of invention has released the terrible enginery of war only means that the final values of all forces depend on the moral character of the men who control them. We now know that there is in our boasted scientific research and ingenious discovery no inherent moral quality. We may increase the speed without changing the character of the speeder. We have conquered nature, in many cases only to destroy her resources and ourselves in the bargain. We have learned that merely to be shrewd does not increase happiness or goodness. We have lengthened the span of life, but how many cubits have we added to the stature of the human soul, or have we increased by one iota the total of human contentment or the joys of honest and kindly living?

We do find unselfish scientific men giving freely of their time and energies for the well-being of men and vast are the gains thereof. Hookworm treatments and yellow fever abatements and plague control and

anti-toxic serums are blessing a suffering humanity. Whence come the motives that produce these services and sacrifices? No one will seriously claim that there is in materialistic science itself any inherent native force that compels it to produce altruistic and humanity-helping results. The methods and results of scientific procedure are as neutral as the wind that blows. The ends of such investigation are increased knowledge and extended power. Whether such gains be for good or ill rests wholly with the moral character of the investigators and users. Witness the fiendish ingenuity of the poison gas makers and submarine builders of the war period. Just what are the motives back of the present officially sponsored propaganda in favour of military aviation?

Our great danger is that we shall go on discovering more nature secrets, and inventing more deadly weapons, without at the same time effecting clearer spiritual vision and releasing a mightier moral dynamic for the control of these energies of good and ill. Militarism is the arch destroyer of all values. Materialistic science is the discoverer and user of new energies. Unless we can find an intelligent moral control there seems no way to save us from destruction.

In the world of spiritual values we seek the answer to the problems of living together. Here we find sure ground of hope. Along the highway of human history we find now and then the working of that reversed gravitation that lifts motives and men above the downward drag of selfishness. If we are to counteract the militaristic spirit and find a balance for

materialistic evolution, we will have to devote conscious attention to the life of the spirit. A soldier individually may be devout, but his methods and results are destructive and subversive of the Kingdom of God. It is not the individual who is to blame, it is the whole organisation of human society on a militaristic basis. It is possible for a scientist to be deeply spiritual and to turn his researches to highest and broadest human uses. There is no essential conflict between science and the life of the spirit, such as exists between militarism and the Kingdom of God. But only a spiritual scientist will make through science a spiritual contribution to human welfare.

Toward militarism our attitude is clear. It is an outlaw, a criminal to be exterminated. Toward the scientist our relation is also clear. He is our valued helper and faithful friend and we owe him our lasting gratitude, *plus* the obligation to discover and release those forces of the spirit that can socialise the results of research and invention.

With the scientist it is a question of motives as well as method, and altruistic motives have ever proceeded from the hearts of men who know God. To know God is to know the Heart of all forces and materials and that Heart is Love and love is ever seeking to serve.

Now we reach a moral paradox. The soul with the mystic touch seeks and practises contemplation for its own sake, and not for any utilitarian purpose whatsoever; but attaining that communion with God, discovers new and powerful social motives, and in doing

so releases a new and active social force that immediately becomes operative in human affairs. This communion of spirit, primarily without social motive, has a wonderful clearing effect in our social judgments and human service, for the simple reason that we now become transmission-channels of the divine purpose to men. The expression of the soul's life in service becomes the saving quality of character. If we give not forth what we have received, we are apt to run off in fruitless rhapsodies and lose our spiritual balance. If we throw ourselves into service and give out without continued receiving, we come to be sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.

If all life of the spirit were suddenly to cease among men, every other sort of life would soon likewise perish, consumed by its own egotism. Never was greater need of Christian mystics who can keep their feet on the earth and maintain contacts with a needy world. He who is to serve effectively must first find for himself the secret Sources of light and life and power. To redeem materialism and destroy militarism, we need something more than negations. Some men must come forth from the Holy of Holies with the secret of all things and the enduement of power from on High. Life is at best a "swinging between the seen and the unseen" and only a redeemed man can become God's interpreter to the world.

This double consciousness must ever characterise the lives of the redeemers of mankind. The outstanding trait of the prophets and apostles is their overflowing spiritual vitality. They gave magnificently

because they had received abundantly. They were seers of visions but visions of reality that profoundly helped their fellow men. They had tasted of the heavenly manna and so fed the hungry about them. Augustine wrote his "Confessions" and then he wrote "The City of God"; most natural sequence. St. Francis reveled in his visions of the unseeable and courted his lady poverty and then went out to serve the poor and needy. John Wesley's name must ever be associated with the heart strangely warmed, but he became one of the greatest social helpers of his age. There never has been a more profoundly practical statement of mysticism than the Wesleyan interpretation of the sixth beatitude. The pure in heart not only see God but become socially efficient.

Here we find our balance. First, a living experience of God; second, that experience expressed in sacrificial service. Rhapsody without service may become emotional insanity. Service without communion becomes a treadmill, powerless above the physical level. Unless we can find some way to impart to the socially helpless something of the moral dynamic of our vision, we shall only continue to wash the pig and send him back to set up another sty.

Redeem the social order we must, but the social order is made up of individual men, each of whom must receive opening of the eyes, and transformation of the heart. Both individual and group are ends of regeneration. Which comes first, the renewed spirit or the redeemed society? Do men live better lives

because of better conditions of life, or because they have discovered a new spiritual dynamic?

Of course we must say to all such questions, "Both!" and in practice they cannot be far separated, but generally the individual awakening comes first. All great social movements have been marked by the appearance of a strong initial leadership, often in response to a widespread but inarticulate demand. The voice of spiritual authority or social leadership inaugurates a crusade. If we count over earth's moral heroes they were ever men who stood alone, who climbed their Horebs or tarried in the wilderness until they had attained some direct communion with God, and henceforth spoke with authority. The social service agencies of to-day, extensive and complex as they are, need nothing so much as a few new prophets who have seen God on the mountainside and have come down to make Him real and His social order effective among men. If, however, our own fountains run dry, if the light that is in us be darkness, how great shall be the failure of our efforts to serve!

At last it is a question of motive power. How short lived are merely humanitarian service motives we know, as we know the inadequacy of intellectual formulas for the cure of selfishness. There is but one sufficient motive force, and that is the motive that moved God Himself to send His Son, because He *loved* the world. No other motive began and no other can continue the age-long pouring out of heart and toil and tears and blood for the lifting of humanity against the down-pull of selfishness and sin. No organisation

for service that omits for long the love-motive can continue to bless. No leader has long maintained the loyal allegiance of his followers unless he has brought to them a new passion that has at its heart an expression of love. If the world is dying of militarism and hatred and selfishness, it is for lack of love, and science is loveless until love comes in from the only adequate Source. We must find somewhere love enough to save the world, or the world will be lost.

Again exact formulas fail us. Love is imparted by love itself, not merely by talking or writing about it. Love is caught far better than taught. Love is received through personal contact with some one who loves supremely and who personifies love in his own life. Love is personal, direct, contagious. No man can love by willing to love, by analysing love, or by devising ingenious formulas for love. We love Him, not because somebody has told us we ought to do so, but because He first loved us and gave Himself for us.

If humanity is to be redeemed it will be through the lives of some who have entered into love, and have brought the radiance to earth in their own lives. They come not with formulas of illumination or analyses of the spectrum, but to bring a glow and glory, and sometimes, unknown to themselves, they shed a radiance on the pathway of stumbling souls. It is possible to pick love to pieces and talk about its elements until the hearers are moved to weary indignation, but it is also possible to say very little about love but go out and live so that men will begin to love one another and behave like sons of God.

Every life of spiritual leadership becomes a focus that gathers few or many who become more or less like their leader. These followers never rise quite as high as their guide, and the initial impulse tends to diminish as it extends further in the sea of life, but every energy thus released is clear gain. Spiritual progress is the total of a succession of new releases of power in individual men who have walked with God and learned His secrets.

Not the least service of these love-filled children of the King is their power to create everywhere a sense of something better just ahead of us. "The people were in expectation," we read, when Jesus was born. Without spiritual expectancy there can be no adequate setting up of the new order on earth. Neither militarism nor materialistic philosophy has been able to create any hopefulness regarding the coming of a better day. We shall never get much of moral optimism from a society whose members survive only by exclusive devotement to the effort to exist at all. Here and there lofty souls must rise above the dead level, pierce the brazen skies and bring the vision down, break the bands asunder and set the captives free, that other men with lesser power to rise against tremendous handicaps may also become free and enter into their inheritance.

This is the practical danger of our multiplied social service programmes and industrial mission projects; that we shall become so busy running about attending to the vexing details that the fires burn low in the power house, and presently the whole movement is a spent

force to which weary men pay but little attention, because they find in it little help. What began as the song of the human heart ends as meaningless brass. We have less reason for concern on account of the impractical mystic who goes off into the heavens and forgets to return to earth; such cases are rare. If the mystic really does establish contact with Reality, that very experience compels him to become a transmitter of what he has received. If he is merely an imitation, his influence is too slight to damage us.

The final test of the soul's contact with Infinite Reality is the result of that experience as registered in life. The experience of soul-union with God is essentially creative and is never stationary. The breathing of the breath of life always produces a living soul, and the incoming, driving energy always works out through life in constructive ways. Such energy of Infinite Love works outward, cuts new channels, opens new fields, establishes new forms of service, invents new methods of helping men. Such love goes out to take up the most unlovely tasks and devise the most unattractive kinds of social reformation. The transformation of the social order is finally a matter of finding a sufficient number of divinely energised individual transformers, who give freedom because they have received from the Infinite fulness grace for grace.

Our great danger is that we live on the surface of things, on the rim of life, and never get through to its great Centre. Out on this edge of things we differ in thought, word, and deed. We oppose and criticise and attack each other, even though we feel underneath that all this is getting us nowhere. Cath-

olic and Protestant, dreaming mystic and honest materialist, we contend each for truth as we see it from our own particular little place on the rim-of-things. Could we meet at the centre, certain it is that we should find more points of agreement than of difference, for in Him who filleth all and is in all we should lose our centrifugal variations and come together in one, even in Christ Jesus. We shall reach the centre, each by his own way and each for himself, and meeting there shall know at last that our citizenship is in heaven, and that His will is to be done by that same heavenly measure here upon the earth.

Here we face the twofold way. The broken and needy world about us calls for the best in us for the healing of its grievous hurt. Such service demands our utmost all. And seemingly in another direction we discern the upward path that invites us to the secret place of the Most High. We long to be lost in God, and it seems as if to do so would be to forget the needy world. How can we enter both paths at once? The answer is that there are not two paths, but one. We have lost our bearings and have misunderstood the nature of God's world. The spiritual universe is spherical; the trouble is that we do not go far enough in either direction, or we should inevitably come to the other side of the twofold fulfilment of life. If we go earnestly to work for men we shall be driven to God for strength, and if we go sincerely toward God, we shall be impelled to give forth to men what we receive. And no matter which way we set out, we shall find Love, Infinite Love at work in the redemption of humanity.

Chapter XIX

THEY THAT HUNGER AND THIRST

THERE are many people who readily admit the existence of a spirit world because of their own inner sense of a reality near at hand but not yet attained. It is possible that having read thus far, there are those who will feel that the only tangible result is a desire to receive the unattainable. Now a desire to receive is significant suggestion that there should exist a something that can, if received, satisfy the desire. There are others who claim that for years they have sought to enter into the land of promise but have been unable to find the way. Some of these unfulfilled hopes may be matters of false ideas as to what may be expected; others are due to conscious or unconscious efforts to imitate the effects produced in other people's lives. In the realm of experience it is easy to mistake nervous expectation for spiritual consciousness, and the most effective means are often too simple to attract attention. "Wash in Jordan" has never been a popular prescription for being made whole. Anybody can do that.

Two fellow-travellers at sea were comparing experiences. One of them had received remarkable revelations, even to the "gift of tongues," by which he would be saved the toil of learning the language of the

Chinese, to whom he was going as a self-appointed missionary. The more modest traveller felt himself at a disadvantage beside the possessor of such highly specialised gifts. Later in the evening he stood looking over the moonlit sea and meditating upon his own lack of thrilling revelations. Another passenger, dissolute and desperate, lounged up and thinking to speak a friendly word, the unblessed brother offered an observation on the beauty of the night. "Beautiful night, is it?" snorted the prodigal in disgust. "What do I care for the night or the moon or anything else except to get ashore and find a good brand of whiskey?" In language that reflected the wretchedness of a soul mired in its own bitterness, he poured out his scorching lament. As he went his embittered way, the other man reflected that doubtless he was possessed of richer and more significant experiences than he had before suspected. At least he was spared the gall of such bitterness, and could lay him down to sleep with the calm consciousness of peace with God and men. Most of the ever-present and far-reaching blessings of the life of the Spirit are like the fresh air and sunshine, too common and plentiful to attract attention. We all have more spiritual experience and benefits than we realise.

Making all due allowance for the benefits we take for granted, the main problem yet stands, how are we to realise the larger inheritance reserved for the people of God? We all know in the deeps of us that there are heights and depths that we have not reached. When conventional terms lose their meaning, and talk

of decision, surrender, consecration, service, only irritate us and arouse a longing for something fresh and virile, it may be the very nearness of the reality we seek that produces the discontent with the stereotyped formulas of traditional evangelism. The needle does not waver unless some metal be near.

Pastors and teachers fall into a difficulty all their own. The exigencies of next Sunday's sermon, or tomorrow's lesson or lecture, creep into the private devotional life till the utilitarian end all but destroys the spiritual value of the hour of prayer. The demands for service are so intense and the desire to give something worth while is so strong that we unconsciously get to thinking of all spiritual exercise and studies as of value only in relation to their usefulness as homiletic material, and so lose the glow in our own hearts. What shall we do?

First of all, separate the exercise of communion with God from service ends. All such seeking of the gift of the Holy Spirit in order that we may use Him for the sermon, the lecture, the lesson or the club is but a modification on a higher moral level of the ancient error of Simon who thought that he could buy and profit by the Holy Ghost. No man can attain the highest fellowship with God for any other ultimate end than the fellowship itself. The Lord our God is a jealous God and unless we seek Him for His own sake, we shall never find Him in any large way. When we seek a closer walk with God for the sake of more power over temptation, a more exalted spiritual consciousness, for increase of spiritual delight, for the

good fellowship of the saints, for material for a sermon or a book on spirituality, we shall make but little progress until we retrace our steps and seek the closer fellowship that we may know God and commune with Him. Single-mindedness is the first condition of entrance upon the mystic way.

There was a certain element of truth in the methodical and mechanical French mystics of the fourteenth century. The limitations of such practices are all too evident but the life of the Spirit must be consciously cultivated if the soul is to grow therein. Many a wakening spirit has died of sheer neglect and starvation. Spiritual fellowship with God is a matter of practice and of keeping right at it. That we may not feel disposed to do so at the moment only indicates that our defeat is at hand if we yield to the snare of inaction. We can enter upon this inheritance of the saints if we are willing to pay the price, and the price is the withdrawing of our attention for a while from the distractions of other matters and steadily holding the attention of the thought of God, of His goodness and His love, of His majesty and His might, of His glory and His power and His exceeding tender mercies, and His great and marvellous works.

In this act of contemplation there is effective help in the devotional passages of the Old Testament, in the words of Jesus, John and Paul, and in the hymns of the church. He who in childhood has committed to memory a number of the best hymns of the church has an unfailing source of spiritual suggestion at his command. All this does not guarantee that there will

be no wandering of thought, and certainly there will be erratic suggestions and the distracting intrusion of the day's business. But with steady practice the soul beats its own pathway to the throne of Grace and comes at last to abide there. Seeking, asking, knocking, persistently followed up, the making of a business of spiritual communion, these are the simple and homely methods by which glorious results are attained. Providing motives have been purged and the eye is single, the whole body shall yet be full of light.

Following this conscious seeking is something that looks like the opposite of this whole effort to attain something. Most of this conscious endeavour is a tuning of the soul for the Master's hand to play upon. But once in tune, once the attention is fixed, we realise that, imperfect though we be, nevertheless in some measure we come to be in the Spirit, and then, *then* it is time to "be still and know that I am God." If we keep on talking now, we shall not hear what the Spirit is saying to us. When we have attained the spiritual wave-length it is time to be silent for God waits to speak, if we will but hear. Strive as we may to enter in, having once entered, we must learn to receive, which is sometimes a more difficult lesson than that of striving.

It is a great triumph when we have eliminated from our motives secondary considerations and come to Him with the single eye. It then becomes a still greater thing to do away with conscious seeking and steadily wait while our expectation is from God. In awed silence the disciples stood about while Jesus said unto

them, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." But they did not receive the Holy Spirit until some weeks later when more prolonged waiting had produced a more receptive attitude. Can it be that some one of us might also receive the Holy Spirit if we were steadily to wait till we attain harmony with God?

Having received something from God, be it rapture or peace or victory over temptation or comfort or understanding, there follows the obligation to give. "Freely ye have received, freely give." For the meagre life, there is one sovereign remedy, the overflowing life. Nothing can spoil more quickly and completely than a spiritual "blessing" that is not shared with some one else. Light isolated from its source is not light at all but darkness, and the light of the Spirit's presence becomes shadow if the heart be shut up to its own interests and benefits.

Having noted the various terms that describe the experience of fellowship with God, we come back to the one inclusive word of Jesus. Love to God and love to men, this is the reality of experience that we seek. But love is so simple a word that we never come to know its full content until we have passed through many experiences of its working, and come to see in it all ranges of spiritual fellowship and higher consciousness and sacrificial service. Love is the fulfilling of the law and the realisation of the Spirit. There is no other one indispensable condition. Of all abiding qualities, the greatest of these is love. Of all high attainments, the most divine is love. Of all remedies for the ills of human existence the one specific cure is

love. Without love, love that beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, we can never get near enough to God to know Him personally. Love is the medium of communion, the atmosphere of contemplation, the channel of communication, and the very breath and being of the life of the Spirit. "Lovest thou me?" How much?

Love supremely, but how? Repeating words is not the same thing as entering into a profound spiritual experience. How then love? By consciously looking for the lovable and finding it everywhere. Love may be cultivated, witness young people at the world-old business of falling in love and causing that love to increase by paying more attention to it. Paying attention is the secret of cultivating love for anybody. There is so much that is lovable in everybody; and there is infinite wisdom in Paul's word, "Whatsoever things are lovely . . . think on these things." Never mind the other and less lovely qualities; we all have some of them; keep your mind on the things that are lovable in people and love will surely grow by what it feeds on.

But what about the unlovely, for it certainly exists everywhere. How did Jesus love so divinely the murderous men who slew Him? There must be a secret about it somewhere. For us there is. If we look steadily on the face of Him who bore our sins in His body on the cross, and look often enough and long enough, there will come into our hearts a welling up of such a spirit of love that we will forget our keen criticisms of human frailties and begin to discover lov-

able traits in everybody. What a lot of looking people sometimes have to do even at ourselves, to find the lovable part of us. And God Himself must needs ignore some of our weaknesses if He is to call us friends and think us worth redeeming.

With the incoming of the greater spirit of love, we shall enter into life and be born again. We shall know at last what only the twice-born can understand, that God is love and light and truth; knowing Him we shall enter into reality and see ourselves as God sees us; at last we shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make us free.

Chapter XX

THE MYSTICS OF CHRISTIAN HISTORY

THERE is some evident relation between great intellectual progress and periods of unusual mystical consciousness. In the alternate periods of movement and counter-movement the explorers and inventors and builders have been succeeded by the spiritual interpreters, and between the two mankind has zigzagged its way along the highway of progress.

There is natural sequence in this. The vigorous and the aggressive break open a new world for which former ideals and interpretations are insufficient. The Seers come with new interpretations and again we know the meaning of the larger life. Old words and ideas need stretching to take in the larger content, and for each rising of the waters of the river of life there is needed a deeper channel.

Christian history records three notable periods of advance, each culminating in the appearance of great mystics who have contributed something of permanence to the thinking of the race. These periods occurred in the third, fourteenth, and the seventeenth centuries and have been variously named and described. Each of these periods produced its great mystics, but the fourteenth century sent forth more than the other two combined. Medievalism was favourable to devel-

opment of the mystical temperament, as modern materialism is unfavourable. However, in all such discussion, the presence or absence of many or few names, in part, may be a matter of the existence or loss of documents relating to the lives and works of the men of the age. It is not a characteristic of mystics to break forth into abundant writings which may be considered by others as worth handing on to posterity.

There are traces of Greek mysticism in the writings of the first two Christian centuries. Philo of Alexandria finds a fellow mystic in John. But the Christian apostles gave a new joyousness and sense of transcendent fellowship with the Father to the expression-forms that otherwise would have been no more dynamic in the life of to-day than are the tales of Grecian mythology. It was the driving energy of the Spirit life of the early Christians that filled the mould of Greek idealism and gave it carrying power. There was no intrinsic need in the early church for importing formulas from without the Christian community, but such forms did appear through the intellectual fellowship of the age and became effective expressions of faith and experience.

There is much of interest in the development of mysticism outside the life and teaching of the Christian church. Most of these developments were half-religion, half-philosophy, stating in some form the idea of temporal illusion and the existence of the Absolute One who might be known through contemplation. All of them made appeals to hungry-hearted men who found in a life of action no abiding peace. From such sources

much of phraseology and ideal found its way into the medieval church.

The first of the Christian Fathers to adopt the expressions of Greek mysticism to the spiritual life of the Christian church was Clement of Alexandria, who gave brilliant expression to the attractive thought-forms of his great teachers. Later on came St. Augustine, whose striking life of missionary activity and literary labours gave wide range for the expression of his own experiences of the spirit. All through his "Confessions" we find abundant record of his own life of communion with God. Contemplation was his own practice and its results speak all through his works.

Outstanding in the history of Christian mysticism is the name of Dionysius the Areopagite. Internal evidence seems to prove that his writings cannot have been produced earlier than the fifth century, although the author assumes to have been a friend of Paul and inscribed his letters to Timothy. Whoever this unknown writer was, he left an indelible impress on the thought of the medieval centuries, for a time surpassing that of Augustine himself. For eight centuries the influence of this Dionysius was strong in the hearts of spiritually minded men. Century after century he was quoted as final authority, and among the medieval mystics his words were considered to be of equal authority with those of the Bible. The outstanding characteristic of Dionysius was his attempt to describe in his three principal works the operation of the third consciousness and the nature of the spirit's communion with God. Later students and writers found their own ex-

periences and aspirations so well described that they came to accept him as standard authority.

Passing by the names of the various mystics of the patristic period, between the second and the seventh centuries, we come to the honored Gregory the Great of the sixth century, who for the first time in Christian history clearly defined the terms of spiritual contemplation and organised them into the formal doctrines of the medieval church. The clear thinking and sound reasoning of Gregory did much to steady the church during the ensuing centuries of shadow when the light everywhere burned low on the altars and men forgot that there were values above those of military conquest and political gains.

Century after century dragged along until at the beginning of the twelfth, St. Bernard appears in Clairvaux, Richard of St. Victor adopted France, the country of Bernard, as his own, and in the same abbey of St. Victor appeared Hugh, another contributor to the literature of the life of the unseen. With these three, more especially with Bernard and Richard, the procession of medieval mystics begins.

The literature of the mystics of St. Victor is almost scientific in its style and spirit. Contemplation and communion are reduced almost to an exact process of exercises and studies, and become a regular department in theology. Elaborate allegory found much use in the teaching of these men. Significant numbers play their part. The stages of contemplation are divided and subdivided, the states of the soul are minutely classified. There is little room left for spontaneity in

the individual experience, and all things are reduced to form and rule. Three, four, and seven are the mystical numbers, and the shadow of occultism casts its baleful pall over all the system they so painstakingly devised.

The names of rising mystics now begin to sprinkle the pages of medieval history. German mysticism begins with the story of St. Hildegarde of the twelfth century. Here arose a group of wonderful women, whose most distinguished light was St. Catherine of Siena. These women came from obscure origins, but by strength of their spiritual force came to extraordinary influence in the history of their centuries. They attacked courageously the evils of their generation, which were plentiful enough, and from their own interior illumination of the Spirit they saw clearly what to others was largely obscure and doubtful. Practical and supremely useful were these women who became great because they projected their spiritual vision into the affairs of their days, and contributed the missing ethical note in a very needy age.

No mention of medieval mystics could fail to omit the name of St. Francis of Assisi, one of the outstanding figures of all time. Untouched by the schooling of his day, or the traditions of his church, St. Francis appears as a new and original motive of whom it was said that "all his learning was comprised in the crucifix." Keenly alive to the voices of nature, indifferent to the dictates of ecclesiastical tradition, fearless in his devotion to his ideals, spontaneous in his outbursts of devotion and song, Francis left an impression that yet

abides in the hearts of sincere men who seek through nature to find their way upward to communion with the Infinite.

A group of Italian mystics followed St. Francis, in decreasing scale of importance and power. St. Bonaventura, St. Douceline, Jacopone da Todi, and the Blessed Angela of Froligno all contributed their own visions and methods to the increasing literature of the contemplatives, and St. Thomas Aquinas the Dominican Friar, of the thirteenth century, marks the full swing of the wave of medieval mysticism, though his greatness as a theologian has eclipsed his renown as a mystic. Meister Eckhart combines rare mystical insight with great intellectual power. Eckhart left an impress upon two centuries that followed him that has been given to but few men to wield. In his efforts to express the inexpressible he used strong terms and used them in extraordinary combinations, and it is not strange that the authorities of his age should view his works with suspicion and combine some of his sayings to his confusion and official condemnation. This, however, but little interfered with his influence with those who sat at his feet and learned of his dauntless spirit.

The most virile of the German mystics is John Tauler (1300-1361). Tauler was a propagandist and was tireless in his zeal for souls. His great concern seemed to have been to awaken men to a "realising sense" of their inheritance as sons of God. In breadth of humanity and depth of spirituality he had no superior in his age. Fervent Catholic that he was, he attacked, as did many other true men of his age, the evils and cor-

ruptions of the ecclesiasticism of his day, and became one of the leaders of "The Friends of God," an informal and extensive society that set its members to the cultivation of the life of the spirit and wrought good in a dark and miry age. This movement produced many visions and visionaries, and great outbursts of ecstasy and mystical experiences were reported. Henry Suso arose to give further form and intensity to the movement of the seekers after union with God. For Suso, the life of the spirit was not a matter for analysis and classification on mechanical theories of soul growth, but a thing of personal spiritual adventure.

From this group of earnest seekers after spiritual reality came a little book destined to have great influence on the life of the ages following. The "*Theologia Germanica*" is the most valuable literary production of the entire movement, although written by some nameless disciple of the greater light. In connection with the story of "The Friends of God," we now meet a great number of names of men and women who experienced and taught and wrote, and lived their lives of contemplation in the midst of a very untoward and perverse world of corruption in church and state.

About this time appears John Ruysbroeck, of Flanders (1293-1382), one of the outstanding mystics of all history. Through his disciple, Gerald Groot, the influence of Ruysbroeck reached Thomas à Kempis, whose work abides down to the present day in the classic "*Imitation of Christ*" and other writings.

Other mystics followed, mostly with lessening re-

noun, till we come to the nameless authors of "The Cloud of Unknowing," in which the spirit of Dionysius the Areopagite first breaks through into English literary expression. This book is the work of minds that had come into a rich heritage of early Christian and medieval experience and teaching, and there is a keen psychological framework discernible throughout. The mysticism of medievalism comes to its close with Julian of Norwich (1343-1415).

Follows a host of names of men, and some women, who caught up the phrases and to some extent reproduced the experiences of the great mystics that had preceded them. Few of them are of outstanding significance in the history of the life of the spirit. The great movement had reached its crest and the inevitable falling off of great names follows.

It was but natural that the reformation should produce in the Catholic church a group of counter-mystics, men who were stimulated to new and intense activities by the very facts of the cleavage in the church. St. Ignatius organised the Jesuits as a military phalanx for the purpose of driving heretics out of existence and restoring the church to its former unity. Santa Teresa, under great difficulties, sought to bring down new fire from heaven to quicken the sluggish coals on the altars of the churches and bring again to living glow the light in the hearts of men. Spanish mysticism produced some brilliant characters, in this splendid woman and in her contemporary, St. John of the Cross, and this small but exalted group left treasures of incalculable value for the succeeding ages. In Spain itself the fire

soon died down and left the land in the grip of tradition and conservatism.

One of the most attractive characters of this Spanish movement appears in the person of Santa Rosa of Lima, Peru (1586-1617), a nun of rare beauty of life and spirit. Jacob Boehme, of Germany, forms another link between the medieval and the reformation age of the spiritual contemplatives. Few and unimportant are the names between Boehme and the rise of the new spirit of evangelical religion and recognised experience in the seventeenth century.

The new mysticism of the seventeenth century was marked by two distinct currents, one within the Catholic Church and one amid the evangelicals both on the continent of Europe and in England. The Catholic movement reached its strongest development in Spain, Italy, and France, and was strongly marked by the general characteristics of the Latin races.

About the middle of the seventeenth century George Fox, in England, led the Quaker and Friends movement which became a strong expression of pure mysticism of the best type, that has no prototype unless it be in the fourteenth century "Friends of God." There now follows a number of names of men who attained more or less of the mystic consciousness, but none of whom made new or outstanding contributions to the literature of their spiritual quest. St. Francis de Sales did much to redeem mysticism from the cloister and relate it to the popular religious rites of his day. In spite of the extravagant worldly life and customs of the century in France, there was an undercurrent of

religious hunger and thirst that found its expression and satisfaction in a valid spiritual consciousness, but not many of its exponents contributed largely to the permanent literature or imagery of the subject. Under so much exploitation the spiritual life was in danger of becoming a matter of good form, but it was natural that the best exponents should be persons who were not in close touch with the fashionable life of the day. "Brother Lawrence," a Carmelite lay brother, has left one of the simplest and clearest expressions of the daily communion of the soul with God, and his little book is to-day one of the choice expressions of the experience of the devout heart.

Madame Guyon, John Gichtel, Peter Poiret, and William Law, succeed to the place of the writers on the life of the Spirit. Eckarthaussen and Saint-Martin lead us to the last of the mystics of the reformation period. William Blake was a man of deepest piety and most intense devotion, but had much difficulty in expressing intelligibly his strange intuitions and visions of spirit.

The evangelical revival which began in England in the later part of the first half of the eighteenth century, under the Wesleys, was marked by a new mystical note of an intensely practical type. The whole case for human redemption was rested upon the evidence of the believer's own heart that he was born from above. If a man could be "saved," he could also be conscious of that fact and that consciousness became a direct communion between the soul and its Maker. Spiritual ecstasy was not an end of this quest, but spirit-

ual certainty was a very essential accompaniment of the work of Grace in the heart. When a man's heart was "strangely warmed," he knew that he had passed from death into life, both because he had the "witness" in himself, and because he experienced a new and overflowing love. This teaching was strong medicine for the formalists of the age, but eventually won its way into nearly all the greater Protestant communions.

From this brief sketch of the names of the leading mystics and the circumstances of their appearing, it may be deduced that, in general terms, four things are to be said.

1. Mysticism, in whatever form manifested in Christian history, has often been a protest against the coldness and formalism into which religion ever tends to fall when left to the machinations of ecclesiasticism and the self-interested manipulations of a professional priesthood. Unsympathetic repression of the spiritual hunger of men stimulates reaction and the mystic appears.

2. The mystics have kept burning on the altar the spiritual light through the dark ages of moral decadence and spiritual night. In spite of all the aberrations and extravagances that at times have crept in, the mystics have maintained a valid testimony to the reality of the life of the spirit, even at the cost of much anguish of mind and sometimes torment of body.

3. Involved in much of the teaching of the mystics is the new-birth teaching of Jesus. The re-born have little difficulty with the strange terms and meaningless expressions of the devotees of the experience of the

soul with its Maker. And no amount of explaining is sufficient to reveal to the unknowing what it is that the initiated are trying to describe.

4. There are signs of the immanence of a new age of mystical consciousness, and that the new spirit will be in some way different from the old. The world is weary of war and force and gross gains and material things, things, things, until the soul is satiated and empty at the same time. Turning from this glut of things, we see a score or two of cults, fads, isms, freak systems and occult manipulations, all more or less wild and irrational, and all seeking for something beyond the veil of the seen and heard. The hearts of men are still restless and they will continue so until they once more find their eternal rest in God. The mysticism of the new day will be a mysticism whose terms of vision and speech will reflect something of the social conscience of the day, and will relate itself to the present world, not in terms of mystic numbers or mechanical devotions, but in terms of life and spirit and brotherhood. The great command of Jesus was stated in two parts; the second was like unto the first. Love to God and love to men will be the standard measure of the spirit-life of any age in which hungry-hearted men find their way to a loving God.

THE END

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